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NYASALAND

UNDER THE FOREIGN OFFICE



*Photo.
Frontispice.*

THE AUTHOR AND HIS DOG.

Dr. E. H. Sinner.

NYASALAND

UNDER THE
FOREIGN OFFICE

BY

H. L. DUFF

OF THE BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA ADMINISTRATION

SECOND EDITION, WITH NEW INTRODUCTION

LONDON
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1906

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PREFACE

WITH the exception of a few connecting paragraphs and explanatory notes, which have since been found necessary to give coherent shape to the work of many solitary evenings, every word of this book has been written among the scenes of which it treats.

It has been my habit to record personal experiences and impressions as nearly as possible at the time of their occurrence; and I have spared no pains to verify, on the best obtainable authority, any statements relating to historical and other matters outside the scope of my own direct knowledge.

Since going to Africa I have often regretted my imperfect acquaintance with scientific methods of research, for I have felt that this disability relegated me, in a country full of natural wonders, to the position of a mere uninstructed observer. At the same time I permit myself to hope that what I have written may be found to possess, in some measure, the freshness and accuracy which are rarely absent from a narrative compiled on the spot; that it may help to recall familiar scenes to those who have known Nyasaland, and that it may enable others to realise, in some

agree, the divers aspects of the country and the nature of the work which has been done and which is still in progress there.

Not the least important part of the aid which I have received in the preparation of this book has been derived from the notes and conversation of friends who, through bias of circumstances, have had access to sources of information not open to me; those, for instance, whose connection with British Central Africa dates farther back than my own, or who chance to have been stationed for long periods in districts with which I am not personally familiar.

The number of those who have helped me in this way is so considerable that I can only thank them collectively. Others there are, however, who have rendered assistance of a more specific nature, and to whom, therefore, my express acknowledgments are due. Sir Clement Hill of the Foreign Office has had the patience to read nearly the whole of my book in manuscript, and has freely given me the benefit of his advice and encouragement. Major F. B. Pearce, His Majesty's Deputy Commissioner for British Central Africa, has (while acting for H.M. Commissioner) kindly allowed me to consult various papers contained in the Government archives at Zomba. I am indebted to Mr. J. F. Jones, Secretary of the British South Africa Company in London, and to Mr. R. E. Codrington, Administrator of North-Eastern Rhodesia, for a quantity of information regarding that part of

Central Africa which is governed under the charter of the Company. Mr. T. I. Binnie, Chief Surveyor of the British Central Africa Protectorate, has supplied with data for a map of the country. Messrs. W. Wheeler and R. H. Salmon have permitted me to make use of their photographs. Through the courtesy of the editor and proprietors of *The Field*, I have been enabled to reprint the substance of various articles originally contributed to that newspaper. Mr. J. N. Willan has been good enough to revise my proofs; and Mr. Edward Bell, representing my publishers, has put forward many valuable suggestions touching the general arrangement of this book. In conclusion I gladly acknowledge my indebtedness to the authors whose works I have consulted: especially Sir H. H. Johnston (*British Central Africa*), Sir F. Lugard (*Rise of our East African Empire*), the Rev. Duff Macdonald (*Africana*), and the late Monteith Fotheringham (*Adventures in Nyasaland*).

1903.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this edition an introductory chapter has been added, dealing with the changes which have taken place in Nyasaland since the book was first written. I am glad also to be able to include a portrait of Brigadier-General Sir W. H. Manning.

1906.

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Photo.

Elliott & Fry.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR W. H. MANNING, K.C.M.G., C.B.

Inspector-General, the King's African Rifles, formerly
H.M. Deputy Commissioner for British Central Africa.

INTRODUCTION

SINCE the first edition of this book was published, certain changes have taken place in Nyasaland, materially affecting the country from more than one point of view. It is with the purpose of touching briefly upon such recent developments as may have a practical interest for intending visitors and settlers that this introductory chapter has been written.

In the first place, then, the administration of the Protectorate is no longer in the hands of the Foreign Office but in those of the Colonial Office, a similar transfer having also taken place with respect to the neighbouring territories of East Africa and Uganda, thus uniting the whole of our East-Central-African dominions under the same department which is responsible for the interests of our colonies in general.

The readjustment had been for a long time in prospect. Notwithstanding the fine record of work accomplished in the African Protectorates under the auspices of the Foreign Office, it was generally anticipated that these dependencies would be placed, sooner or later, under the control of that branch of the Imperial Government which is specially concerned with Colonial affairs. And

when this ultimately came to pass in Nyasaland it was felt that the country had reached a turning point in its history, and had, so to say, emerged finally from its primitive state, to assume its due position as a settled and organised part of the Empire.

Among recent local undertakings, the commencement of the Shiré Highlands Railway is the most important. It has been truly said that no country can be fairly judged until it has a railway, and this is especially true of a country like Nyasaland, which is extremely difficult of access and has hitherto had to depend, for its communications with the outer world, upon the long and somewhat uncertain waterway of the Zambesi-Shiré.

The railway now in course of construction will run from Port Herald, on the Lower Shiré, to Chiromo, and thence along the valleys of the Ruo and Tuchila to Blantyre in the Shiré Highlands, a total distance of 112 miles, of which 60 miles are already open for traffic. It is hoped that the line will reach Blantyre in a year's time, whence it may be extended towards Lake Nyasa. There has been talk also of a connecting railway to pass through Portuguese territory from Port Herald to the sea, and, though nothing definite has been announced about this scheme, it is much to be hoped that it may pass, sooner or later, into the category of accomplished things. In any case the completion of the line to Blantyre will mark a very distinct epoch in the history of Nyasaland. Already the traveller can be carried by rail from

the low-lying Shiré valley almost to the top of the fine plateau which stretches between Blantyre and Mlanji, a journey which, until recently, he must have performed in a machilla (hammock).

Apart, too, from the railway, communications in general have much improved, and more civilised means of locomotion are now being introduced in the shape of rickshaws, bicycles, and so forth. Needless to say the roads are not metalled. They are simply tracks eight or ten feet wide, but they are immeasurably better than they used to be, indeed quite as good as one could reasonably expect to find in a country where the European community is still very small, and is not subject to any direct taxation.

In fact, almost all the district roads will now admit of motor bicycles being driven over them at a high rate of speed, which is no light test for paths of this description. On the other hand, the question of roads for heavy vehicular traffic (carts, waggons, etc.) has hitherto been a difficult one, and has occasioned some periodical grumbling from the public, who are apt to proceed (not wholly without reason) upon the principle that there cannot be too much criticism of public works.

The question, of course, is essentially one of pounds, shillings and pence, the cost of keeping such highways, with their bridges and drifts, in a thorough and permanent state of repair being more than the resources of the Protectorate can yet afford.

It is certain, however, that, as the railway advances and draws all transport to itself, many of

our existing roads will be gradually superseded, and it will then perhaps be possible to replace the present extensive system of inter-district tracks and paths by a lesser mileage of substantial feeder routes for wheeled traffic between the railway and the principal centres of industry.

With regard to the equipment necessary for intending visitors to Nyasaland. It has been suggested that I should insert a list of useful articles in this chapter, but my own experience has been that such lists are rarely of much practical use. For example, as to everyday garments :—some men wear khaki or gabardine, others tweed ; some favour breeches and gaiters, others prefer knickerbockers and putties ; others again tuck their trousers into their socks. The hard-headed person goes forth in a Terai hat ; he whose skull is thin covers it with a stout helmet. These are things which every man will learn to decide for himself, without reference to what he may have read in books.

However, there are a few important points which ought to be borne in mind ; thus—

1. The climate of Nyasaland varies greatly according to season and altitude, and can be very cold and wet as well as very hot and dry.

2. The laundry methods of native servants are extremely destructive to underclothing, of which an ample supply is necessary.

3. Footgear is an item of which the importance is often overlooked. Boots cannot be locally repaired with any satisfaction to the wearer.

4. Dress clothes should be taken. They will

infallibly be wanted, though not necessarily very often.

As to household effects in the case of an intending settler. No iron or tin ware need be brought out (baths, cooking utensils, etc.) nor any heavy furniture. Regarding such items as linen, glass, china and so forth, the question is one to be decided according to the taste and means of the prospective householder. If he has money to spare and is particular about such things, he had better purchase them at home. But most men will probably find enough to satisfy their requirements in the good plain assortment of such articles which are provided by the local stores. Auction sales, too, are frequent.

In the case of temporary visitors, sportsmen and others, I should certainly advise them to get practically all their outfit at home. When pleasure is the object in view, and time is more limited than money, the traveller should start thoroughly well equipped, if he means to avoid annoyance and delay.

As for consumable stores, the local prices are very much higher than in England, and it is a question whether any advantages that may accrue from procuring such goods on the spot are not outbalanced by the greater variety of selection and smaller cost in the case of consignments from home.

Such things as fowls, fish, vegetables, eggs and so forth are still to be had from the natives in comparative plenty at prices which, though much in excess of what they used to be, are certainly very moderate. Cattle can be easily bought, and

butter and milk are procurable almost everywhere.

At Blantyre, which is the commercial capital of the Protectorate, the visitor will find a Hotel, a Sports Club, a Bar, and other tokens of advancing civilisation, besides such graver establishments as a High Court of Justice, a Registrar's Office, and a Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce. I may add that two gentlemen have lately entered into practice at Blantyre as solicitors, so that intending litigants and others are now able to obtain expert advice in their difficulties.

A highly satisfactory feature in the recent history of Nyasaland is the marked improvement in public health, especially the greatly increased success which now attends the treatment of blackwater fever among Europeans.

When I first came to Nyasaland, in 1897, this disease was a veritable scourge in the land, and it was estimated (by Sir H. Johnston) that no fewer than forty per cent. of cases ended fatally. At the present time, provided that a blackwater patient has no organic failing, likely to induce complications, the risk is little if at all greater than in other serious fevers, while ordinary malaria, which formerly claimed many victims, figures comparatively rarely in the records of mortal disease.

Of course this is not to say that the natural chances of contracting fever are less than they used to be, or that the necessity for prudence is at all diminished. The climate of Nyasaland is essentially malarial and cannot be defied with impunity. The decrease in the European death

rate is simply due to the fact that the white population now lives under better and more comfortable conditions, that people are learning to treat fever with greater respect, and that medical officers—in the case of blackwater, at any rate—have gradually gained a fuller experience in the treatment of disease.

It must be added that the European mortality this year seems likely to be higher than usual, owing to the circumstance that a number of deaths have recently occurred among contractors and others employed on the railway works; but, naturally, any increase from this source must be regarded as exceptional and not as indicating any deterioration in the general standard of public health.

Agriculture.—Several new departures have been made recently in the way of agricultural experiments. Tobacco has been tried with a very fair measure of success. It is described as of excellent quality, "equal to high class Virginian," and is grown chiefly for the Transvaal market, where, thanks to free entry, it is able to compete on favourable terms with other tobaccos. Until recently it was understood that this free admittance of Nyasaland produce was in the nature of a "quid pro quo," in return for facilities afforded by the Protectorate to the recruiting agents of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association. It is, however, gratifying to note a recent utterance of the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies to the effect that endeavours would be made to arrange for a continuance of the favourable treatment of Nyasaland imports into the Transvaal,

even though the recruiting of Protectorate labour by the Witwatersrand Association should cease.

Tea of good flavour, but at present to only a small amount, is grown on the Western slopes of Mlanji Mountain.

Coffee continues to be a leading product, the exported crop for 1905 amounting to 56,826 lbs.

But the most important agricultural development has been in the direction of cotton growing. This movement, in its origin, was part of a systematic endeavour to establish cotton plantations as a permanent asset in all suitable parts of British Tropical Africa. Everything possible has, in fact, been done, both by the Government, by the British Cotton Growers' Association, and by the planters themselves, to make the industry a thorough success. While excellent prices have been realised in many instances, it must be confessed that the latest results are not altogether encouraging, except perhaps as regards the output of native-grown cotton, which has very greatly increased.

Stock Breeding.—Although large herds of cattle are no longer owned by natives, as was formerly the case in Waakondeland and Angoniland, the number of European cattle owners is now relatively considerable, and there have been some tentative importations of pure stock with a view to improving the local breeds. There can be no doubt that the resources of Nyasaland and adjoining territories as a stock-raising country are equal to far greater demands than have yet been made upon them.

The majority of herds at present are numerically small, and are kept principally for the sake of fresh dairy produce. But, with the Rhodesian markets close at hand, there is no reason why cattle should not be bred as a serious business. With regard to transport I need not enter here into the vexed question of tsetse fly and other possible obstacles; but I well remember that, after the Mpeseni campaign in 1897-98, large numbers of cattle were driven from the confines of the Protectorate into Rhodesia without mishap, and it seems reasonable to believe that what was done then could be done now. It has been suggested that an annual live-stock fair might be instituted in the Protectorate in order to attract regular purchasers, and the idea has much to recommend it. Given an established market, the Nyasaland stock breeder would be in a very favourable position. The expenses of keeping cattle are almost absurdly small; the beasts seem to thrive upon the ordinary jungle vegetation, and certainly fatten in a remarkable way among the salt-grass of the higher table-lands. These beautiful plateau-pastures, lying at altitudes of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, have quite the aspect of an ideal stock-raising country, and indeed closely resemble the great pastoral regions of New Zealand.

The beneficial effect produced upon domestic animals by the hale air, the pure water, and the nutritious feeding of these elevated meadow-lands is very wonderful, as I have myself frequently witnessed, in the case of herds driven up from the plains to the six-thousand-foot plateau on Mlanji.

Whether cattle could be kept there all the year round is open to question. In the case of native animals, the continuous rains and cold winds of the winter season might prove fatal, but an infusion of hardier imported blood would doubtless inure them to these temporary climatic rigours, which, after all, are much less severe than in many other parts of the world where stock breeding is successfully pursued. In any case the climate of the plateaux, for at least six months in every year, is mild enough to admit of the most delicate beasts being sent there for a change of air and pasture.

Apart from the potentialities of stock breeding as a contribution to the prosperity of the country, it would add very much to the charm and interest of life in Nyasaland to see any form of such industry established on a prosperous footing, to say nothing of the advantages to the individual which a pastoral life has over the life of a tropical agriculturist.

A word as to the terms on which land can be obtained may not be out of place here. Crown lands are sold by auction, at a minimum upset price of five shillings per acre, but preference is usually given by Government to leases of from seven to twenty years, which, in the case of agricultural lands, are subject to a rental of five per cent. on the upset sale price.

The rent of Crown Land for building purposes in the neighbourhood of townships varies according to situation from £5 to £15 an acre, on a twenty-one years' lease. Pastoral leases from the

Crown can be arranged at low rentals. Agricultural estates can also be bought or leased from various local firms.

Labour.—It is a little disappointing to reflect that the native labour problem, which has exercised the wits of legislators and others in all parts of Africa for so many years, should still be an outstanding difficulty and likely to remain so. That there is no absolute deficiency of workers is now generally admitted. The evil consists rather in a deficiency at the particular season when labour is most needed for agricultural purposes. The planters complain that, while they have to turn workers away in the dry weather, from April onwards, they are left short of men just at the critical period of the year, during the rains, and are thus compelled to lose much of the fruits of their earlier industry.

On the other hand, the natives say that they cannot work for white men during the wet season, because they are then engaged in cultivating their own land. Their contention, in effect, is that while the white man grows his crops for profit, the black man does so for food, and that increased wages are no compensation to a native for a short harvest of the millet and maize upon which he lives.

—In point of fact, while this argument is not wholly devoid of truth, it is generally much overstrained, for the requisite labour in native gardens is performed chiefly by the women. A more cogent reason, and a very simple and intelligible one after all, is that the native particularly dislikes

working in cold and inclement weather. He has to do a month's annual labour in order to earn the money for his hut-tax, and he prefers, not unnaturally, to undertake this labour in the sunny season, and to retire to his village before the rains have set in.

No doubt it would be an excellent thing if the negro could be induced to exert himself more than he does, and could be roused to some sense of responsibility and ambition; but it seems that he is not inclined to take any step in that direction. The question therefore arises whether Government has the right to interfere with his mode of life, as a teacher regulates the conduct of his pupils.

Many humane and experienced men are honestly of opinion that this course ought to be adopted, that, in short, a certain degree of benevolent compulsion ought to be applied to the natives. They hold that the mental and moral status of the Bantu is too low to entitle him to the unlimited indulgence of his free will in a mixed community. They contend that his will at present is simply the will to be ignorant, sluggish, and thriftless, and that consequently it behoves a Protectorate Government, standing *in loco parentis*, to exercise its authority in the matter as a father might do in the case of a refractory child.

Plainly opposed to this, on the other hand, is the tradition of our Imperial policy, which forbids us to assume that any subject is to be debarred from the fundamental right to live as it pleases him, provided he commits no offence against the

laws. We require the native to contribute a fixed sum towards the costs of administration, and we require him to behave in an orderly and peaceable manner, but (according to the tradition mentioned) we have no right to interfere with him any farther, even from motives of pure benevolence, still less with any collateral expectation of advancing our own interests.

I have put both these arguments into plain words, because they represent the two principal points of view from which the native question may be regarded, the first standing for the opinion of probably a decided majority of the European settlers, while the second may be said to be the official attitude.

My own feeling is that this question of native labour, and the other kindred problems which arise out of our presence as a small dominant caste in the midst of a great aboriginal population, are matters which will never be completely settled by any special act of legislation. The difficulty lies in the peculiar characteristics of the Bantu negro, and human character is not a thing which can be altered by a stroke of the pen.

If a remedy is to be had we must look for it, as I think, in natural developments ; we must trust to personal influence and to the influence of events. This may seem cold comfort, perhaps, but there are already indications that the primitive irresponsibility of the Central Africans is beginning to be affected by changes in local conditions. It must also be remembered that the labour supply of the Protectorate is now undergoing a temporary

dislocation, owing to the construction of the Shiré Highlands Railway. On the completion of the line there will be set free for other avocations, not only the numerous gangs now employed on the railway works, but the tens of thousands who have hitherto taken service as carriers in all parts of the country.

I ~~believe~~ that we may safely look for great things from the abolition of this system of human portage, which, up to the present, has withdrawn such multitudes from the more healthy and legitimate occupation of field labour. Nor must we omit to take into account the recent extensive ingress of alien natives into the Protectorate from adjoining territories. I estimated from careful personal observation that not less than five thousand Anguru immigrants, from Portuguese East Africa, settled in the Mlanji district alone during the years 1904-5, and at least as many again must have passed through Mlanji into other parts of the Protectorate. Everything, in fact, points to a rapid increase of the native population. A convincing statistical proof is afforded by the evidence of the hut-tax returns. In 1905 the revenue from this small tax of 3s. per hut amounted to close upon £30,000. Every year brings a steady increase from the same source, and it seems likely that at no very distant date our black taxpayers will place the Protectorate in the proud position of a self-supporting community.

Religious Missions. — Before leaving this question of the natives, justice requires that some

acknowledgment should be made of the steadily increasing success which is attending the work of missionary teachers among the people of Nyasaland. I refer more particularly to secular education, and to the general training of the native in habits of temperance and industry.

I make this acknowledgment all the more readily because it seems that parts of my original chapter on missions were somewhat misunderstood in certain quarters when this book first appeared, and were taken to indicate a lack of sympathy with the objects of missionary enterprise. As regards the substance of what I then wrote, touching the differences which formerly divided the missions from the lay community, I am still of the same opinion—namely, that faults existed on both sides. Nor do I, even yet, see eye to eye with missionaries in all respects, but that is not inconsistent with entertaining a warm appreciation of their motives and of the increasing measure of good which they are effecting in tropical Africa. Perhaps, while dealing with the thorny topic of ancient misconceptions and errors, and while condemning certain doctrines which have always seemed to me mistaken and dangerous, I may unconsciously have done, or seemed to do, something less than justice to the high and benevolent purposes which lie at the root of missionary enterprise, and to the patience and sincerity with which those ends have been followed.

One of the most welcome developments which the last few years have brought about in Nyasaland is the better understanding, the more

spontaneous goodwill which now exists between missionaries and all classes of the lay community—a fortunate omen, let us hope, and more especially, perhaps, in so far as it affects the relation between missionary bodies and the temporal government which can lend each other such valuable aid, operating as they do, in distinct spheres, for the common good.

I cannot bring this chapter to a close without adverting to an event which, in the natural course of things, is likely to be not far distant. Sir Alfred Sharpe has now served in British Central Africa for a long period of time; he has filled the responsible post of Commissioner for the last ten years, and it is reasonable to anticipate his retirement or promotion in the near future.

Few men living have had a more thorough and varied experience of tropical Africa than he. His memories of Nyasaland go back to pre-Administration days, to the time of the North End War, and to the many vicissitudes that beset the Protectorate Government at the outset of its career. The knowledge gained in those adventurous years has since been of the greatest practical value, for it has enabled him to bring a trained judgment to the consideration of local affairs, and to deal wisely and justly with the large native population committed to his charge. The esteem and goodwill of all classes in Nyasaland have been with Sir Alfred Sharpe during his tenure of office, and will follow him when the time comes for him to leave the little Protectorate where he has passed so many active and eventful years.

NYASALAND

CHAPTER I

FOUNDING OF THE PROTECTORATE

THERE is perhaps at this day no British possession so little known to the British people as the one of which I am about to write. Far removed by its geographical situation from the great centres of political and commercial activity, its brief history, while full of incident, contains hardly anything of that sensational element which, at different times, has so powerfully drawn the attention of the world at large to other parts of the African continent.

Recent events have made every English man and woman familiar with the position and extent of the South African colonies. Uganda has been forced into prominence by its mutiny, and later by the construction of its railway. West Africa has achieved a sinister notoriety as the grave of a prince nearly connected with the royal house, and as the scene of atrocities like the massacre of Benin. Millions who never saw Egypt in their lives followed closely on maps and in newspapers

the campaign of Omdurman, while even now public attention is beginning to centre upon affairs in Somaliland. Alone of our African dominions, the little Protectorate of Nyasaland, with a record conspicuously free from the scandals of maladministration, remains almost a *terra incognita*.— I doubt whether the British Empire contains a thousand families who at this moment are bound to Nyasaland by any particular ties of interest or affection; and if any untravelled man of average information were suddenly asked to indicate its exact whereabouts, he would be just as likely to put his finger on Lake Chad or on the Congo Free State as anywhere else.

Roughly speaking, the Protectorate may be said to lie directly north of the Zambesi, in the south-central part of the African continent, and to include the middle and upper parts of the Shiré Valley, the plateau known as the Shiré Highlands, and the whole western shore of Lake Nyasa.

I propose to devote the following introductory paragraphs to a short examination of the events which operated to bring this territory under British rule. For the present I shall avoid any discussion as to the advantages which the country may be supposed to derive from its situation on a great, almost continuous chain of waterways, or any inquiry into such topics as the capabilities of the soil and people; for it does not seem that this aspect of the case was one which materially influenced our policy with regard to Central Africa at the time when its possession was made the subject of rival claims.

The truth is that very much less was then positively known about the resources of Nyasaland than about its disabilities. The former had scarcely been tapped. The latter were too obvious to be overlooked. The country was generally reported to be unhealthy, to be difficult of access,¹ to be inhabited by wild and ignorant native tribes. The expenses of founding and maintaining an administration there were likely to be considerable,² and nothing was more certain than that the country itself would for years be incapable of contributing much towards those expenses. There was, therefore, no particular reason why the most rabid Imperialist should regard it on its own merits with a covetous eye. At the same time the fact remained that British adventurers had obtained certain interests in the neighbourhood, and it was felt that the circumstances under which those interests had been acquired were such as to emphasise in a peculiar manner the duty of the State to guard them from infringement. In a soil like that of Central Africa the tree of civilisation grows hardly and by slow degrees, watered with the sweat and blood of men and rooted in forgotten graves. Lord Salisbury has justly described the early Nyasaland settlements as "splendid monuments of British energy and enthusiasm"; and wherever such energy and such enthusiasm have been brought

¹ The navigability of the Chinde mouth of the Zambesi had not then been ascertained.

² Funds for the purpose were eventually guaranteed by the British South Africa Chartered Company.

to the task of Imperial expansion, wherever such risks have been faced and such difficulties overcome, it lies most clearly with the Mother Country to preserve and extend the work of her pioneers, lest there come the shameful after-knowledge that, through her own default, brave men ~~served~~ her without effect, and gave their generous ~~lives~~ in vain.

Such then was our title to Nyasaland, and such were our responsibilities there. Nor is evidence lacking to show that the Imperial Government did in fact view the situation in the light of its responsibilities, and that, in assuming direct control over Nyasaland, it was primarily influenced not by considerations of mere territorial aggrandisement or political expediency, but by a simple determination to protect, at all reasonable cost, the rights of the handful of British subjects who had been the first to enter the country and the first to attempt its development.¹ Considered on these grounds, the establishment of the British Central Africa Protectorate was not merely justifiable, but in strict accordance with a fundamental axiom of all civilised administration. Nor, assuredly, can that measure be counted as a reproach to Great Britain on the ground of anything like sharp practice. It was the desire of the British Government, in the first place, to protect British interests in Nyasaland, not necessarily by founding a Protectorate there,

¹ Livingstone's death in 1873 was immediately followed by the founding in Nyasaland of the Free Church and Church of Scotland Missions, and of the African Lakes Company.

but merely by restraining any other power or people, pending negotiations, from overrunning or annexing the country. That the Protectorate came into existence when it did was due to the fact, made evident at last by certain marked demonstrations, that those interests could be adequately safeguarded in no other way. The demonstrations spoken of came from two separate quarters—from the Portuguese on the Lower Shiré, and from the Arab slave-raiders at the north end of Nyasa.¹

By Portugal the display of British activity in the Shiré district had been viewed, from the time of its inception, with an uneasiness and discontent not altogether surprising if we consider the position in which she stood with regard to Africa generally. Her possessions in that continent had long been to her a source of passionate interest and pride. They were the earliest of all her foreign settlements. They were among the few foreign settlements which she had succeeded in preserving intact through every extremity of fortune. Their acquisition had been the dream of the greatest of her princes. They formed part of the legacy bequeathed to her by the ablest and boldest of her pioneers ; by men whose names are indissolubly connected with the period of her glory and her power ; by men whose courage and energy had triumphed over difficulties till then deemed invincible, and whose adventures had

¹ The circumstance that these aggressions occurred about the same time obliges me to mention them in a juxtaposition which, I need scarcely add, implies no further parallel.

been the wonder of Europe a hundred and sixty years before the ships of Van Riebeck anchored in Table Bay. There is in truth no finer story in all the annals of maritime enterprise than the story of those early navigators who, sailing from Lisbon in clumsy little "caravels" of sixty or seventy tons, turned their faces resolutely towards the then mysterious South, battled across many thousand miles of fierce, uncharted sea, discovered Guinea, sighted Angra Pequena, doubled the Cape of Storms,¹ and set their marble cross upon the headland of Algoa.

It would be impossible within the limits of this chapter to trace the steps by which Portuguese influence was gradually extended through Africa to the island of Ceylon, to the coast of India, to Malacca, to China, and to Brazil, or to examine the causes which soon afterwards undermined that influence and produced the dissolution of that mighty empire, of which the very wreck and remnant still secure to Portugal in the world at large a far from inconsiderable prestige. The defeat of Alcantara, by which her independence was temporarily forfeited to Spain, and the disasters which subsequently deprived her of a great part of her possessions in Asia and in America, seem to have prostrated Portugal for the time being to such an extent as to leave her no energy for the development and consolidation of the territories still remaining to her in Africa. It was not until the close of the

¹ Cabo Tormentoso—the Cape of Good Hope.

eighteenth century that a design for uniting the Portuguese provinces on the east and west coasts of that continent by the annexation of the intervening region, including of course the Shiré district, was suggested to the Portuguese Government by one Doctor Lacerda e Almeida, a professor at the University of Coimbra, whose singular shrewdness had enabled him to foresee that, in the absence of some such bar, British influence, then newly established at the Cape of Good Hope, would eventually extend itself indefinitely towards the North. Lacerda was in fact appointed soon afterwards to the command of an expedition, formed for the purpose of carrying out the scheme which he had propounded; but his death in the interior brought the movement to a standstill, and it does not seem to have been renewed until, with the advent of British pioneers on the Shiré, a hundred years later, his country first saw the thin end of the foreign wedge driving between her ancient dominions of Angola and Mozambique. Then indeed she sprang into activity and decided on a strenuous effort to realise Lacerda's plan of a transcontinental empire even at the eleventh hour. But it was too late. The apprehensions which had given birth to that plan had already fulfilled themselves. The representatives of another people had entered the long-neglected region, had wrought manfully to reclaim it, and were naturally not disposed to cede a footing which had been won in the face of great perils and hardships. Against their plea of effective settlement—the best of all possible titles to a new

country—Portugal could urge nothing more weighty than the vague right of pre-emption which she sought to deduce from her long tenancy of the adjoining lands.

Had a rivalry of this nature given birth to some degree of bitterness and ill-will among those who were personally involved, it would have been perhaps rather a matter for regret than for surprise. It is, therefore, pleasant to record that, while no effort was spared by either of the contending parties, the actual struggle was conducted throughout with a good sense and generosity worthy the traditions of both—worthy of the nation to which colonial enterprise owes its origin, and of the nation which has since carried colonial enterprise to its most successful issue. Matters, however, reached a crisis soon after the arrival in the country of Mr. H. H. Johnston (now Sir Harry Johnston, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.), who had been appointed Consul for Portuguese East Africa. Up to that time the Shiré province had been respected by Portugal as disputed territory, and, pending an exact adjustment of her claims and those of Great Britain, the Ruo River, an eastern tributary of the Shiré, had been allowed by tacit agreement to be the provisional limit, as it has since become the actual limit, of Portuguese possessions in that quarter.

This position of affairs was, however, speedily upset by the ardour of Lieutenant Coutinho, who, towards the end of the year 1889, replaced Major Serpa Pinto in the command of the Portuguese forces on the Lower Shiré. Impatient, appar-

ently, of the delays inseparable from pacific arbitration, this officer suddenly crossed the Ruo and burnt a Makololo village, which was then situated on the right bank of that river, near the modern township of Chiromo. Some severe fighting had previously taken place below Chiromo, between Major Serpa Pinto and a Makololo Chief named Mlauri; but the other Makololo headmen, acting under British advice, had abstained from helping Mlauri or showing any hostility to the Portuguese. What would have been the ultimate issue of Coutinho's action it is difficult to say, but he had advanced no farther than Katungas, on his way to Blantyre, when he was recalled by his Government and fell back to the left bank of the Ruo.

In the meantime, six hundred miles up country, the Arabs of North Nyasa were in arms against the representatives of the African Lakes Company. The interest which this conflict excited at the time among statesmen in England was very considerable, and might seem rather singular to those who forget that what appeared to be nothing but an encounter between a lately established trading concern and a race of savages, was in reality a crusade, which was to decide the supremacy of civilisation over heathendom and the abolition of the slave trade in Nyasaland. The struggle is indeed to the lasting honour of the handful of white men who undertook it, and who carried it, through many disappointments and privations, to a not unsuccessful issue. It was, however, scarcely of their own seeking.

The establishment of the Lakes Company's trading station at Karonga in the Nkonde country nearly coincided, in point of time, with the appearance in the same neighbourhood of the Arabs themselves; and, for a while, both parties continued to live at peace with each other and with the local tribe, the Wankonde, a simple, pastoral people, markedly distinguished by the simplicity and friendliness of their disposition. What followed is but one of many similar tragedies connected with the history of the slave trade in Africa. On a variety of pretexts the Arabs began to fortify their villages with strong stockades, until they had established themselves in a position of comparative security. Their next move, after the manner of their kind, was to cast about for some neighbouring ally who might assist them in the furtherance of their designs.

Now it so happened that a certain tribe, by name the Wahenga, flying from the hostility of the Angoni-Zulus, had, some time previously, sought and obtained a refuge among the Wankonde. Though inferior in numbers to the people among whom they had thus settled, these Wahenga were of a much more warlike disposition, and with them accordingly the Arabs opened negotiations. Dr. Kerr Cross, who served in his medical capacity throughout the North End war, assures me that a certain number of the Wahenga subsequently joined us against the slavers; but, however that may be, a pact, in this instance, was certainly concluded between the two, and, having united their forces, they fell suddenly upon the

wretched Wankonde, who, taken by surprise and armed only with spears, could offer no effective resistance to the guns of their assailants. From that day forward the Arabs, under their chiefs, Mlozi, Kopa-Kopa, and Msalimu, constituted themselves the scourge and terror of the land. One after another the quiet, pretty Wankonde villages were raided and destroyed. The immense herds of cattle, which had been such a source of pride to their simple owners, were driven away. Whole communities were broken up in a single night, the men shot down without ruth, the women and children carried off into slavery. The success of these raids naturally brought a great increase of strength and prestige to the Arabs, who gradually overran the whole country, carrying devastation wherever they went, until, by an act of wanton cruelty, not easily paralleled even in the annals of savage warfare, they raised up a new enemy against themselves. I refer to the still well-remembered massacre of defenceless Wankonde in the Kambwe Lagoon.

Roused to indignation by the magnitude of this atrocity, and warned by the threats of the Arabs that their turn might soon come, the Europeans in the neighbourhood resolved at last to intervene. Fortunately for them at this juncture a leader was not far to seek. Monteith Fotheringham, then agent of the African Lakes Company at Karonga, was a man of remarkable shrewdness, courage, and force of character. His sympathies, like those of his companions, had always been strongly with the Wankonde; but, conscious of

the inadequacy of the resources at his disposal, and unwilling to compromise the interests of the company by which he was employed, he had hitherto abstained from committing himself to a struggle, the issue of which must then have seemed exceedingly dubious. Confronted, however, with the plain alternative of fighting the Arabs or evacuating North Nyasa altogether, he made his decision at once and proceeded to act upon it with promptitude and vigour. The fortification of Karonga was begun, Wankonde fugitives were accorded protection, and the tiny steamer *Ilala* was dispatched with all speed to bring reinforcements from the south.

It is not my purpose to enter here into a history of the long war to which these events were preliminary, and of which detailed and graphic accounts have already been furnished by Fotheringham himself and by Captain F. D. Lugard (now Colonel Sir F. D. Lugard, K.C.M.G.), both of whom write from personal experience of what occurred. With Fotheringham were associated at different periods of the campaign, Messrs. Nicoll, Frederick Moir and John Moir, all of the Lakes Company; Consuls Hawes and O'Neill, Dr. Kerr Cross and the Rev. J. A. Bain of the Free Church Mission, together with various other Europeans, including men like Captain Lugard, already mentioned, Mr. Alfred Sharpe, and Mr. Richard Crawshay, whom natural love of adventure and a chivalrous desire to help had drawn into the disturbed area.

During a period extending over nearly two

years, these men, with no better material under their command than levies of Wankonde, Atonga, and other native tribes, maintained against the slavers a persistent war. Despite, however, the courage and pertinacity with which the struggle was carried on, despite triumphs like the successful defence of Karonga against a five days' assault, and counter attacks like the unsuccessful but not less brilliant attempt on Kopa-Kopa's stockade, no permanent impression was made on the enemy; and it began to appear at last as though matters would never be brought to a decisive issue without the aid of disciplined troops and regular munitions of war. Captain Lugard, who, since his arrival on the scene had acted as commandant of the British forces, eventually withdrew from Nyasaland in March 1889, at which date the Arabs, though they had undoubtedly experienced a severe check, were still quite unsubdued. Fotheringham indeed writes that, as late as June 1889, the country "remained in a chronic state of disorder."

In September of the same year Mr. H. H. Johnston arrived at the North End. Mr. Johnston's ultimate purpose was to try and secure for Great Britain as much territory as possible by concluding treaties of protection with the various chiefs inhabiting the Nyasa-Tanganika Plateau and the shores of Lake Tanganyika itself, as he had already done further south. But his immediate object at the north end of Nyasa was to negotiate a peace between the African Lakes Company and the Arabs, who

were still engaged in active hostilities. Overtures of a similar nature had been made without effect, early in the previous year, by the late John Buchanan, then Acting Consul for Nyasaland. By this time, however, it is to be presumed that the Arabs were nearly, if not quite, as exhausted as their opponents, and were therefore not unwilling to come to terms. However that may be, Mr. Johnston's diplomacy was so far successful that a treaty of peace, designed to provide for the security of the Wankonde people from further molestation at the hands of the Arabs, was duly signed on October 22, 1889, amid general rejoicings.

In the meantime Mr. Alfred Sharpe had been appointed to conclude treaties of protection to the westward, in the direction of Central Zambesia, the Luangwa River, and Lake Mweru; so that, tranquillity having been restored to the North End, Mr. Johnston was free to proceed on his journey across the Nyasa-Tanganyika Plateau. His original wish had been to travel in person as far as the northern extremity of Tanganyika; but, shortly after his arrival at the southern shore of that lake, circumstances obliged him to abandon this project; and, having entrusted the completion of his designs to his lieutenant, Mr. A. J. Swann, by whom they were afterwards faithfully carried out, he left for England about the middle of 1890, in order to lay the results of his work before the Foreign Office. Agreements with Germany and Portugal followed, whereby the limits of the British sphere were more or less exactly defined;

and, during the spring of 1891, a British Protectorate was formally declared over Nyasaland and the Shiré district, Mr. Johnston being appointed as Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General to administer these newly-acquired territories, while the remainder of the British sphere of influence was placed under the control of the British South Africa Chartered Company.

services of a small force of Sikhs and Mahomedan troopers, under the command of Captain C. M. Maguire, of the Hyderabad Contingent, who certainly, on his arrival, found plenty of work ready to his hand.

It would, I think, be scarcely accurate to describe the natives of Nyasaland and the Shiré Highlands as essentially warlike. The reckless courage and strong military instinct of the Zulus, for instance, are certainly not possessed by any of them, except perhaps in a minor degree by some of the Angoni, who are themselves of Zulu descent. Yet, at the same time, these Central African natives, like most primitive races, are or were animated by a certain love of bloodshed for its own sake, and by a still stronger aversion to any settled form of government tending to deprive them of opportunities for raiding and looting their weaker neighbours.

Impelled by these motives, they made a sustained and violent resistance to the establishment of British ascendancy. On a general review of the period under consideration, we find that, with the single exception of Jumbe of Kota-Kota, no chief of any power or standing in the whole country from the Songwe to the Ruwund was induced to submit to the authority of the new Government without a recourse to arms.

In the three districts of the Shiré Highlands, in the district of the Upper Shiré, in South, West, and North Nyasa, in Marimba and in Central Angoniland, the little army of the Protectorate was engaged for six years in almost

incessant hostilities. A few of the recalcitrant chiefs were prudently satisfied with a single trial of the fortunes of war, but many renewed their efforts again and again, some of them persisting until death, while two at least, Makanjira and Zarafi, though driven after a long struggle from the territory of the Protectorate, never gave in their submission at all, nor were brought to personal account for their misdeeds. If there is any one moral to be deduced more clearly than another from campaigns of the kind in which we were then engaged, it is that hostile natives, especially such as these were, notorious robbers and slavers, should, when beaten, be beaten thoroughly and given no opportunity to recuperate for a considerable time.

The alternative policy, which a scarcity of troops and other considerations occasionally forced us to adopt during the early stages of our presence in Nyasaland—that is to say, a policy of more or less indecisive campaigns, followed by treaties made only to be broken at the convenience of the natives—is a mere *pis aller* at best, and one that has cost us dear in every quarter of the earth.

If we grant, as grant I think we must, that it is the duty of civilised nations, by reason of their civilisation, to control and instruct their savage brethren, then let us beware how we cavil at the force by which alone the way for that high purpose can be made clear. That force is war; and the more effectually it is employed, the sooner will swords be beaten into ploughshares.

God forbid that I should advocate undue harshness towards natives—least of all towards the natives of Central Africa, whose welfare is my keen interest and with whom I have contrived to live for many years on terms of complete good-will. It is indeed quite as much in their behalf as in our own that I speak, convinced as I am that one severe lesson bears less hardly in the end, on them and on us, than many half measures.

Sir Harry Johnston in his book on British Central Africa makes separate allusion to each of the many campaigns in which his administration was involved. The present chapter, however, is intended to do no more than indicate in a general manner what has been so carefully detailed in that work, and I shall therefore confine myself to a very brief analysis of the principal expeditions which were forced upon us at this time by the hostility of certain powerful chiefs.

There are not, of a surety, many countries where the "dead past buries its dead" more quickly than in Central Africa. Permanent native records are of course entirely absent, and the habit of oral tradition, which elsewhere picturesquely replaces written history, does not seem to be cultivated to any appreciable extent. But after a lapse of twelve years, a few names, a very few, once household words in a thousand villages, still languidly survive. In the Shire Highlands the story of Kawinga is not quite forgotten. On the Upper Shire, that of Liwonde is perpetuated by the British station called after him, "Fort

Liwonde." In South Nyasa the people sometimes speak of Mponda, of Zarafi, and of Makanjira, as at the north end of the lake they speak of Mlozi.

The men whose names have been thus preserved were not great potentates in the sense in which the term is generally understood. They were all veritable savages—dirty, ignorant, and uncouth. They were all slave-raiders and freebooters of a peculiarly brutal and unromantic kind. But they all possessed numerous followings and enjoyed considerable local reputations; they were all animated by a bitter and perfectly intelligible dislike to European intervention; and, in the early days of the Protectorate, when British authority had not yet rooted itself deeply in the land, their conspicuous hostility was a menace to be reckoned with, and occasioned a degree of inconvenience and danger which entitles them to be considered in any narrative of those times.

In addition to these men, a host of less notorious malcontents took up arms against us from time to time, but the former were our most serious opponents; and among them none certainly caused us greater annoyance than the South Nyasa trio—Mponda, Zarafi, and Makanjira.

Mponda, who was the first to measure himself against us, lived on the right bank of the Shiré, close to where that river makes its exit from Lake Nyasa. Towards the end of 1891, Mr. Johnston and Captain Maguire arrived in the district at the head of an expedition directed primarily against Makanjira, who had been be-

having in an outrageous manner. Mponda and some other chiefs in the immediate neighbourhood seem to have been amusing themselves at this time by casual inter-tribal hostilities, which were beginning to obstruct communications on the Shiré, and which accordingly Johnston was anxious to bring to an end by friendly mediation between the rival parties. This pacific intention was, however, frustrated by the circumstance that Mponda had a number of slaves in his hands, a summons to liberate whom being insolently refused, brought about a collision which resulted in the destruction of Mponda's town and in his temporary subjection to British authority.

By way of a check on Mponda, a settlement, destined to gain a terrible reputation as the most unhealthy in British Central Africa, was founded at this time in the reedy swamp opposite to his main village, and received the name of Fort Johnston. With the final pacification of South Nyasa, the *raison d'être* of a British fort in this particular locality ceased to exist, and the entire township was accordingly removed, some years later, to the position which it now occupies, lower down the river. Had it not been for the strategic value which circumstances thus temporarily assigned to it, there is little reason to believe that the exact site of old Fort Johnston would ever have been chosen for a European station at all. The disadvantages of the place for such a purpose are too patent. It is a mere sponge; a jumble of fen and fog, dank, poisonous, melancholy; and the traces of human occupation still

extant there, the old watch-tower, the ruined houses, the lonely graves, set a seal as it were on the simple desolation of Nature and make it at once pathetic and sinister.

The subjugation of Mponda was followed by the submission of Zarafi, who, hearing of the defeat of his neighbour and fearing lest an invasion of his own territory might follow, hastened to make terms with the conquerors.

Johnston was now free to proceed against Makanjira, who was soon to prove himself the most unscrupulous, the most dangerous, and the most stubborn of all our enemies. Alone among them, he seems never to have had recourse even to those makeshift treaties by which his fellow-chiefs so constantly sought to avoid retribution and to gain time. From the day of our first appearance in his neighbourhood to the day when he was driven, at last and for ever, across the frontier of the Protectorate, he exhibited at least the single virtue of consistency and showed himself in his true colours as a rancorous foe to British rule. Even on the occasion of this his first meeting with us, he made a fierce resistance, repulsing Mr. Johnston, who had landed to attack him; and it was only after the advent of reinforcements under Captain Maguire, and some hard fighting, that his town was eventually destroyed.

Having accomplished this much, the expedition returned to Zomba, where Kawinga had taken up arms against us. It was found necessary to attack this powerful chief without delay, and

the task was accordingly performed by Captain Maguire and Mr. Buchanan, who carried most of Kawinga's strong positions among the Zomba hills and finally compelled him to sue for peace. During these operations Maguire was wounded in the chest, but he had no sooner recovered from his hurt than he returned to South Nyasa and resumed hostilities against Makanjira, at whose hands he was now doomed to incur disaster and death. Cruising in the steamboat *Domira*, Maguire found two of Makanjira's dhows at a spot some miles to the north-east of Fort Johnston, and had landed with a small force of Indian troops in order to destroy these vessels, when he was suddenly attacked by crowds of Makanjira's people. After a short scuffle, in which several Sikhs were shot, Maguire ordered his men to fall back to the *Domira*, which had run aground in her efforts to approach as near to the shore as possible. Maguire himself was one of the last to enter the water, and was killed before he could reach the steamer; while Mr. McEwan and Dr. Boyce, who went ashore later under a flag of truce, in order to recover the body of their leader, were seized by Makanjira and treacherously murdered. The spot where these events occurred was afterwards marked by a fort, which received the name of Fort Maguire, in memory of the brave soldier who lost his life there.

The reverse above described was followed by hostilities on the part of Zarafi. Some indecisive fighting against this chief resulted in another makeshift peace, soon broken, however, by

further aggressions, which, early in 1892, became so pronounced that Mr. J. G. King, the official then in charge of Fort Johnston, collected some Agoni warriors and made an assault upon Zarafi's stronghold. The attempt failed; Mr. King and his associate, Dr. Blair Watson, were both wounded; several Sikhs and native soldiers were killed, and a 7-pounder gun was abandoned.

It will be understood that the position of affairs in the Protectorate was now very difficult and even critical. Nevertheless, the year immediately following was marked by important administrative progress, notably by the Land Settlements, by the institution of a Customs tariff, and by the establishment of Judicial Courts and of a regular Native Hut Tax. At the same time, the foundations of an organised Civil Service were laid; the construction of permanent roads was undertaken by Captain Sclater, R.E. (who afterwards died in Uganda); the military forces were placed under the control of Captain C. E. Johnston, 36th Sikhs, who had come out to fill the vacancy caused by Maguire's death; and, finally, three gunboats were dispatched by the Admiralty, in charge of Lieutenant Hope Robertson, R.N., for service on the Upper Shiré River and Lake Nyasa.

Early in 1893, trouble occurred with Liwonde, a chief of the Upper Shiré, whose slave-trading operations had become too impudent to be overlooked. He was accordingly attacked and deposed after some sharp fighting. In the same year, Lieutenant Edwards (subsequently Lieut.-Colonel, died of blackwater fever at Zomba,

1897) came to British Central Africa, and was followed by Lieutenant Manning, 1st Sikhs (now Brig.-General W. H. Manning), each of these officers bringing with him a fresh contingent of Indian troops. This much-needed addition to the strength of our military forces had been rendered possible by arrangements concluded between Mr. Johnston and Mr. Cecil Rhodes, in accordance with which the British South Africa Company agreed to contribute certain sums towards the administration of the Protectorate.

In the meantime, it must not be supposed that we had forgotten Makanjira, who, elated by his triumph over the unfortunate Maguire, had since proceeded against our allies Kazembe and Jumbe, had driven the former from his home at Rifu, and had reduced Jumbe to dire straits by fomenting rebellion among his people. The causes which had operated to prevent us from undertaking a punitive expedition against Makanjira, at the time of Maguire's death, had been removed by the subsequent arrival of the lake gunboats and of the troops under Lieutenants Edwards and Manning.

Thanks to these reinforcements, we were now quite able to deal with Makanjira either by land or water, and it was therefore decided to move against him at once. The first thing to be done was to save our poor friend Jumbe from his rebellious subjects. These rebels were commanded by one of Jumbe's own headmen, a person named Chiwaura, who, at the instigation and with the help of Makanjira, had already repulsed Jumbe

in the field, and had since established himself in a fortified position of considerable strength near Kota-Kota. This position was accordingly bombarded and afterwards carried by storm, Chiwaura being killed during the operations. Our next step was to reinstate Kazembe. This accomplished, we were free to turn our arms against Makanjira himself; and eventually we succeeded in routing his people and destroying several of his villages, a fort (Fort Maguire) being afterwards erected in the neighbourhood in order to guard against any further hostilities on the part of Makanjira, who, refusing to make peace with us, had meanwhile escaped, I believe, into Portuguese territory.

During the following years (1894-95), the Civil Service of the Protectorate was further organised, while Mr. Johnston, in the course of a visit to England and another to India, concluded important arrangements with the home Government regarding our financial position, and with the Government of India regarding a permanent supply of Indian troops. It was now decided to transfer the charge of finding funds for the development of British Central Africa from the shoulders of Mr. Rhodes and of the Chartered Company to those of the Imperial Government. The efficiency of our military forces was amply provided for by agreement with the Government of India, which assured to us a contingent of two hundred Sikhs for a period of six years. At the same time, it was settled that the control of the lake gunboats should be handed over by the Admiralty to the authorities of the Protectorate. While these and

other matters were being arranged by Mr. Johnston, the administration of British Central Africa was entrusted to Mr. Alfred Sharpe, to whom reference has already been made in connection with the North End war.

The only serious trouble which occurred during Johnston's absence was occasioned by Kawinga, against whom it will be remembered that we had fought a somewhat indecisive campaign in 1891. Having amused himself by a good deal of desultory robbing and raiding since that time, he now determined (early in 1895) to try a renewal of hostilities against us on a rather elaborate scale, his ultimate object being apparently nothing less than the sack of Zomba and the expulsion of the British from the Shiré district. This ambitious scheme was, however, checked almost at the outset by the sturdy opposition of a few Sikhs and Atonga riflemen, who, under the command of Mr. William Fletcher, formerly a corporal in the Royal Engineers, held a small fort against Kawinga until their ammunition was nearly exhausted, when, by a sudden charge, they routed the enemy's troops altogether and drove them headlong from the field. This gallant and most opportune action, for which Mr. Fletcher afterwards received the thanks of the Marquis of Salisbury, had the effect of forcing Kawinga to withdraw into his own fastness of Chikala, where he was eventually defeated and subdued by Captain Manning and Lieutenant Hamilton.

On Johnston's return from England, operations were commenced against the hostile chiefs Matip-

wiri and Zarafi, with the result that Matipwiri was defeated and captured, while Zarafi, following the example of Makanjira, withdrew eastward into Portuguese territory. Mponda of South Nyasa, who had concluded a peace with us as far back as 1891, showed some inclination about this time to resume the offensive, but prudently altered his mind and surrendered in time to avert a regular engagement.

Of all the powerful chiefs whose hostility had been a menace to Mr. Johnston's administration, only one now remained to be dealt with. Mlozi of North Nyasa, who had been a ringleader in the aggressions upon the Wankonde, and whose insolent and ambitious spirit had largely contributed to prolong the subsequent war between his people and the African Lakes Company, began once more to show himself in his true colours, as a bitter foe to British interests and as a slave-raider of the most brutal and unscrupulous kind. Accordingly, towards the end of 1895, an expedition was dispatched to bring him to his account. His town was surrounded, shelled, and carried by storm. He himself was afterwards captured in an underground cellar, where he had taken refuge, and, being brought to trial on a charge of murder, was convicted, sentenced to death, and hanged.

The fall of this notorious malefactor may fairly be said to mark an era in the history of British Central Africa. With the possible exception of Makanjira and Zarafi, he had shown himself by far the most malevolent and formidable of all our enemies. Now that he was gone, the pacification

of the country seemed in a fair way to be accomplished, for there remained against us only chiefs like Mwasi Kazungu of Marimba and Tambala the Yao robber, both of whom were in fact crushed very soon afterwards.

In 1896, Johnston's connection with British Central Africa came to an end, and he returned to England, his services having been rewarded in the meantime by a K.C.B. Much of what was achieved during his administration he admits to have been the work of loyal colleagues and subordinates, but there is no doubt that the credit of the Protectorate as it stands is largely due to his own energy, perseverance, and fertility of resource.

During the five years which immediately followed the founding of the Protectorate (1891-6), the country had progressed in a remarkable manner. The value of its trade had much more than doubled. The European population had multiplied itself nearly six times. Indian traders had arrived in considerable numbers. English coinage had been put into circulation. The mileage of roads had increased from nil to 390. Slave-raiding and highway robbery were practically things of the past. Military stations had been established all over the country. Gunboats and trading steamers plied both on the River and the Lake. A postal system had been introduced. A printing office had been set up. An organised Civil Service presided over the administration of justice, the collection of revenue, and the maintenance of public works.

CHAPTER III

MY INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

WHEREIN lies the extraordinary fascination of Africa? By what charm does she draw and hold the hearts of men? I do not speak of the mere lust of riches—the *auri sacra fames* that drives its thousands every year to the cities and goldfields of Rhodesia and the Transvaal, nor of the mere desire for a brighter and purer climate that urges so many invalids towards the hills of Cape Colony. The Africa which I have in my mind is not the Africa of the South at all, but of the East, West, and Centre—an Africa where few can hope to find health or speedy fortune—a country which, less than fifty years ago, was represented by an almost blank space upon the map of the world and in the written history of mankind; a country still very partially explored, very imperfectly equipped with the conveniences of life, inhabited for the most part by strange, ignorant, and often hostile tribes; a region of great solitudes, severed from Europe by many thousand miles of ocean and by an almost continuous line of malarial coast.

It is a difficult thing, even for one who has lived long in this Africa of which I am speaking, to

analyse precisely the mixed motives which induce men to cast in their lot with her. Impatience of the monotonous life of cities, impatience of conventional restraints, the love of adventure, the love of sport, the stimulus of the Imperial sentiment, the desire to satisfy an honourable personal ambition—all these are represented ; but there is something else besides, something which is felt, and felt strongly, but which cannot be explained or written down—a vague abiding charm, peculiar to the waste places of the earth and to Africa above all others.

* * * * *

I date my first serious desire to see the interior of Africa from a certain winter evening in the year 1896, when I held a long conversation on the subject of Uganda with my friend the late Major A. B. Thruston, who had lately returned to England on leave of absence from his military duties in that country. Although naturally a man of quick and generous instincts, Thruston was strongly averse to anything like overt displays of enthusiasm, and the descriptions which he gave me of his life in Uganda were couched in language almost cynical in its restraint. But whoever has read the reminiscences of this brave and accomplished soldier,¹ published shortly after his death, will be able to understand the sympathy with which I listened to his spoken words. Between the lines of that modest little book, his ardent spirit can be

¹ *African Incidents*, by Major A. B. Thruston. Published by Messrs. John Murray, Albemarle Street.

seen as clearly as I saw it beneath the dry reserve of his speech and manner. Moreover, there were moments when he could not altogether conceal the interest which he felt in Uganda; and, on my expressing a wish to see that country myself, he strongly encouraged me to go there. I therefore sent in to the Foreign Office an application, backed by such little influence as my family possessed, for an appointment in Uganda or one of the neighbouring Protectorates. In January 1897, Thruston returned to Uganda, and almost at the same time I left home on a visit to India. I was still in Bengal when, in October 1897, the Foreign Office offered me a post in the Administration of British Central Africa. This was, of course, not the same thing as Uganda, but I had made up my mind to refuse no chance of becoming acquainted with the interior of Africa. I therefore telegraphed my acceptance of the offer, and a month later found me on board the German East Africa Company's steamer *Safari* then lying in Bombay harbour. We left Bombay on November 19, and sighted the coast of Africa after an uneventful voyage of ten days. I was greatly pleased with many of the ports at which we touched on our way south; notably Lamu, Tanga, and Dar es Salaam. The latter, which is in German territory, has been planned with all the neatness of a Rhenish town, and overlooks a remarkably beautiful bay, the entrance to which is masked by a spit of land covered with palm-trees.

My enjoyment of these fresh scenes was, how-

ever, destined to be interrupted by news of the saddest kind. Both at Mombasa and at Zanzibar rumour was rife of a serious disturbance in the hinterland. At Mozambique this rumour was confirmed; and on reaching Beira, I first heard particulars of the mutiny of the Uganda Rifles, of Thruston's gallant attempt to recall them to their duty, and of his untimely death. The news affected me greatly. It seemed a strange and ominous thing that my entry into Africa should coincide with such a tragedy. But the report which I had received was authoritative and final. Thruston's name has been introduced into these pages because my connection with Africa had its genesis in him; and now with the close of his own story he passes out of mine.

At Beira I was obliged to transfer myself from the well-found liner, which had brought me from Zanzibar, into a small, dirty, and unstable coasting boat. Moreover, to my profound disgust, it appeared that, for several days to come, the water at the Chinde mouth of the Zambesi would not be sufficiently deep to float us over the bar. Accordingly, instead of going straight from Beira to Chinde, we headed back through the hot seas to Mozambique, and thence made our way southward *via* Quilimane, arriving at Chinde on December 22. Mr. Sharpe, who had succeeded Sir Harry Johnston as Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General, was at this time returning to England on leave of absence. Under his guidance the fortunes of British Central Africa had remained comparatively undisturbed for a period of



Photo

Filott & Fry

SIR ALFRED SHARPE, KCMG, CB

II M Commissioner and Consul General for the British
Central Africa Protectorate

eighteen months ; but almost simultaneously with his departure a serious outbreak occurred among Mpeseni's Angoni, a powerful tribe inhabiting the territory of the British South Africa Company on the western confines of the Protectorate.

The history of the Angoni is remarkably interesting and curious. Although their name is a household word all over Nyasaland, and although there is scarcely a village from the Rukuru to the Shiré in which they have not made their presence felt, they can hardly claim to be native to the country at all, being of Zulu descent, and having seceded from the Zulus proper of South Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century. The original cause of their secession was the tyranny of the notorious Chaka, against whom they revolted under their chiefs Zwide and Zongindaba, and by whom they were defeated probably about the year 1820 or a little later. Fearing the vengeance of Chaka, whose merciless policy towards the vanquished was well known to them, the Angoni now broke up, and a large number, under the command of Zongindaba, marched away to seek fresh settlements towards the north. They were not alone in their expatriation, for, nearly at the same time, the hostility of the Zulu king drove out two other celebrated chiefs with their following. Sotshangane fled to Gazaland. Umsiligazi (Mosilikatse) entered the Transvaal. Zongindaba, destined to wander farther afield than either, led his people successively through Swaziland, Tongaland, and Karangaland, slaying and devastating wherever he went,

until in 1825 he reached the banks of the Zambesi. The Angoni themselves relate that on that day the sun passed from the heavens, and that, in the terror of the sudden darkness which followed, Mombera, afterwards one of their most famous chiefs, was prematurely born. However that may be, the river was at length safely crossed, probably not far from Tete; and, still holding towards the north, the Angoni impis advanced through Sengaland up the western side of Lake Nyasa as far as the country of the Ba-Tumbuka, where they halted and, for the first time, formed a regular settlement, only, however, to abandon it a few years later, when, as though moved by irresistible impulse, the whole tribe once more resumed its wanderings and, keeping always northwards, came at last to the southern end of the great lake Tanganyika. Here, in what is known as the Fipa country, Zongindaba died. As might have been expected, his removal from the scene was not without important effect on the history of the Angoni themselves.

All that we know of him leads us to believe that Zongindaba was a man of much ability and force of character. Not only do tribal legend and the evidence of his few surviving contemporaries point to this conclusion, but his known exploits, the broad features of his career, make it apparent that he must have possessed considerable talents for government and war, as those terms are understood among savages. There is indeed much in his record that is not unworthy to compare with the achievements of despots far

better known to history. Out of the fragments of a defeated and broken people, this man had rallied a great host of adventurers. He had led them through all manner of perils and vicissitudes for nearly two thousand miles into the mysterious, black north. At their head he had done battle with unvarying success against every tribe encountered on his line of march. He had seen his original band of desperate fugitives grow rich in captured flocks and herds, and increase continually through the incorporation of vanquished peoples, until it assumed the guise of a great heterogeneous community, with a dominant caste of his own blood and innumerable alien dependents, slaves and concubines. This mixed assembly he had governed for many years in the only way in which such assemblies can be governed. Not for nothing had he been born a Zulu and bred under the shadow of a rigid military tyranny. The political methods of Chaka, learnt by bitter experience, he had since consistently put into practice on his own account. His reign had been ruthless, but it had been watchful, it had been strong ; and, as nearly always happens in such cases, its close was followed by change, by disorder, by the rivalry of individuals, and eventually by tribal dismemberment.

It was not that there was any lack of chiefs having good claims to succeed him. There were indeed too many, but no one among them seems to have been able to take to himself paramount authority over the rest. In the end various leaders gathered together each his own adherents.

One section alone persisted in holding the northward line, and, fighting as it went, penetrated as far as Lake Victoria Nyanza. The remainder, unwilling perhaps to pass beyond the spot where their old chief had perished, began a reflex movement towards the south. A large clan under Mombera and his brother Mperembe reoccupied the beautiful country of the Ba-Tumbuka. Chewere and Chikusi led their followers into South and South-West Nyasaland, while yet another branch under Mpeseni (also a brother of Mombera's) established itself in the Loangweni Valley and adjacent territory, on the edge of what is now North-Eastern Rhodesia.

This general disintegration and redistribution may be said to mark the end of the Angoni wanderings. The settlements then formed have since proved to be permanent, and the different localities mentioned continue to be inhabited by people of Angoni descent up to the present day. It must not be supposed, however, that in abandoning the errant life which they had led for so many years, the Angoni changed in any way their ferocious and predatory habits. On the contrary, from having been a mere passing scourge, here to-day and gone to-morrow, they became a resident evil, a source of perpetual terror to all Nyasaland. So frequent and so bloody were their raids that the Achewa, Achipeta, Ajawa, and other unwarlike peoples, distrustful of the open plains, withdrew for safety into the most desolate and inaccessible fastnesses—into the midst of swamps, into barren clefts and

corners of the hills, into any position that seemed likely to afford a shelter from the dreaded enemies of their race. The mountain villages of these wretched fugitives are still to be seen, huddled under cliffs or hidden in deep ravines, and whitened piles still mark the sites of their lake dwellings. But the descendants of those who took refuge there now live where they please, content and secure, for the power of the Angoni has been broken at last and utterly, and the name of that people is a menace to the land no more.

The outbreak of 1897-98, to which I have referred, was not the work of Mpeseni himself. The latter was described to me by one who knew him personally as a man of considerable dignity and intelligence. He was certainly inclined to be well disposed towards Europeans, probably because he had sufficient acumen to foresee the result of a quarrel with them. But at the time of which I speak Mpeseni was a man far past the prime of life. His young warriors, more particularly certain of his sons, were in a high degree turbulent and headstrong, and their constant victories over neighbouring tribes had imbued them with a most exaggerated sense of their own power, and a belief that they could cope successfully even with the Mzungu (European). The judgment of the old chief disapproved of this nascent spirit of defiance, but his enfeebled will was powerless to check it. Matters rapidly drew to a crisis until, in December 1897, a report arose that two white men had been murdered in the Angoni country. This piece of news eventu-

ally proved to be untrue, but it was speedily ascertained that several Europeans, officials of the North Charterland Company and others, were in fact shut up in peril of their lives in a little fort in the Loangweni Valley, and that the general condition of affairs in that neighbourhood was such as to call for the immediate dispatch of troops.

The British South Africa Company was not, however, at that time in a position to afford the required assistance, and the task of rescuing the beleaguered men devolved accordingly upon Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Manning, who, as Her Majesty's Deputy Commissioner, had succeeded to the control of the Government in British Central Africa during the absence of Mr. Sharpe. The position of affairs at the opening of the campaign was full of difficulties. The little army of the Protectorate numbered scarcely 1000 Sikhs and native riflemen, led by nine British officers and accompanied by a few field and machine guns, while the different companies composing this total were scattered over several more or less isolated military posts. Mpeseni's warriors were variously estimated at from 5000 to 25,000 in number, their actual strength being probably about 10,000. They occupied a country unmapped, almost unknown, heavily wooded and full of hills, which rendered an advancing column peculiarly liable to flank attacks. The urgency of the situation, moreover, called for the most strenuous promptitude of action, though it was at that time the height of the rainy season, when the moist

and enervating heat, the incessant storms and the dense profusion of grass render locomotion of any kind both tedious and difficult.

Captain Brake, who was stationed in command of a small force on the Bua River, had received instructions to await reinforcements; but, before these could arrive, letters reached him from the besieged men stating that they were in deadly and instant peril, and imploring help in such terms as induced Brake to take independent action and start for the Loangweni without delay. His troops suffered greatly from the effects of the weather and from the severity of the marches, but the armed resistance shown by the Angoni was much less formidable than might have been expected. The column eventually reached the Loangweni in good order, and Brake, to his relief, saw the flag of the North Charterland Company still flying over a little fort in the valley, and knew that he was in time. His troops were received by the besieged men with frantic enthusiasm. They had indeed arrived none too soon, for the Angoni impis had massed in the neighbourhood, and were on the point of delivering a final assault on the fort.

A day or two later an action took place between these impis and the relieving column, wherein the former were broken up and severely punished. Captain Brake gives an interesting account of the manner in which the B.C.A. Rifles conducted themselves both during the long and trying march and in the subsequent engagements with the enemy. Not one of these hardy people fell out

between Fort Jameson and the Loangweni, while in action they behaved as coolly as if on parade. The Angoni, on the other hand, did not altogether sustain the high reputation for courage which they had previously enjoyed. It is quite likely that their frequent intermarriages with the unwarlike Achewa and Achipeta tribes had weakened the qualities of their Zulu descent; and, moreover, this was their first experience of troops led by British officers and backed by machine guns. The effect of the latter in particular confused and disheartened them; for although, according to Brake, the enemy often charged with a great show of determination, the fire of the guns nearly always checked them before they could get within assegai range. From this point, despite a good deal of desultory resistance on the part of the Angoni, the campaign rapidly drew to a successful close. Colonel Manning arrived with the remainder of the Protectorate forces. Mpeseni's kraal was burnt. Tsingu, one of his sons and a chief instigator of the troubles which had occasioned the war, was captured, tried by court-martial, and shot. Mlongeni, another ringleader, fled to the hills with a price on his head. A few weeks later Mpeseni himself, who had escaped with a small following into the bush, voluntarily surrendered. By reason of his age and infirmities, and of the friendly spirit which he had on several occasions shown towards Europeans, he was leniently dealt with, and received permission to rebuild his kraal and to end his days in his own country. But his power had of course wholly

passed from him, and his people found themselves suddenly reduced to a position little more important than that of the neighbouring tribes over whom they had tyrannised for so many years.

While these events were in progress, I pursued my way towards Zomba, where the head-quarters of the Administration are situated, travelling by the Zambesi and Shiré rivers. No man with any sense of adventure can fail to experience something of curiosity and delight on first entering this mighty waterway by which, within the memory of men still living, the greatest explorer of modern times passed on his final journey into the dark places of the interior. The mystery of the Zambesi is the mystery of the Congo, the Niger and the Nile; for these are the four great arteries of Africa, and carry abroad the pulses of her hidden heart.

The Chinde mouth of the Zambesi is an open and rather imposing estuary. Chinde itself is a mere cluster of tin-roofed houses half smothered in the pale sands of the Zambesi delta. It is a tolerably healthy settlement of nascent importance, but the coming and going of a few ships scarcely suffice to redeem it from the stagnant melancholy of its general aspect and surroundings, and the new-comer will scarcely be tempted to stay there longer than he can help. Immediately above Chinde the river becomes a mere network of minor streams, lost in a wilderness of reeds and mangroves. The course steered by the little steamboats which navigate these waters is perforce curiously erratic. So closely at times does

the devious channel approach the shore that stray branches almost brush the decks. The general outlook is strange and not unpleasing. Silent backwaters, lying ashen and sad among the tufted grasses; innumerable divergent currents, leaving the main stream at every angle and vanishing in tunnels of leafage; here and there a clump of bananas, or a bush netted over with the profuse exquisite blooms of the mauve convolvulus, or a *Borassus* palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) rising stiff but not ungraceful beneath its crown of spiky fronds. A day or two of this, and the scene changes. Instead of a multitude of broken channels, behold one great river flowing strongly between belts of sand, in curves so sweeping, in reaches so broad, that the traveller might be forgiven for supposing that he had happened upon a chain of lakes, were it not that the water-level is broken by frequent shoals into all sorts of eddies and cross currents and little trails of foam. The pebbly beaches and the ragged reed-beds beyond them are covered with birds—spur-winged geese, ducks of many kinds, purple coots, slim piebald terns with beaks of gold, sombre cormorants, glittering kingfishers, clouds of white and tawny squacco herons (the *Ardetta* heron of Livingstone), perhaps a pelican or two. In mid-stream a number of black bulky objects are moving and rolling about. As the steamer approaches, they sink noiselessly to reappear in her wake. It is a herd of hippopotamuses. Until recently, these ponderous animals constituted a very real source of danger to the navigation of

the Zambesi and Shiré rivers. More than once Europeans travelling in "house-boats" have been upset in mid-stream by these beasts, and have, in consequence, lost all their luggage and come within an ace of losing their lives. Even yet the hippo is an abiding terror to the natives who paddle their own canoes ; but steamers are rather too much for him, a fact which he seems to have accepted, poor old fellow, for I have never heard of his taking any active measures against them of late years. The fact is that he has grown very shy and suspicious. Perhaps some of the spirit has been knocked out of him, for he has been cruelly harassed, fusilladed from shore and from deck at all seasons and with all manner of weapons, from elephant rifles to Lee-Metfords. The day will come, doubtless, when we shall see him no more in these his ancient haunts, nor hear his hoarse voice break the stillness of the tropic night.

Villages abound on the banks of the Zambesi as well as on those of the Shiré, and are surrounded in due season with an extensive patchwork of native crops. The only agricultural industry practised by Europeans would seem to be that of sugar planting, which is carried on to a certain extent, chiefly by the Portuguese. It has occurred to me that the cultivation of indigo might be profitably added to that of the sugar-cane. From what I saw of indigo while travelling in Behar, I should say that the conditions of soil and climate which obtain in these riparian districts are precisely those which are

best suited to the requirements of the plant, while cheap labour, another essential, could be easily procured. About a hundred miles above its delta, the Zambesi receives the drainage of Lake Nyasa through the channel of the Shiré River. Much less broad than that of the Lower Zambesi, the waterway of the Shiré is continually divided by small islands, generally covered with dense, green grass, and abounds in those floating accumulations called "snags," which constitute one of the most serious obstacles to its navigation. Entering this stream from the main Zambesi, the traveller finds himself transported, almost suddenly, into the midst of bold and wild scenery, being carried under the edge, as it were, of the Shiré Highlands, whose rough, dark spurs abut closely upon the junction of the two rivers.

The Portuguese, who possess both sides of the Zambesi, also hold the right bank of the Shiré up to a point in the vicinity of Port Herald, and the left bank as far as the Ruvo River, where they have a settlement exactly facing the little British township of Chiromo on the other side.

With the familiar Union Jack flying over its neat houses, and with its broad roads and its avenues of Persian lilac, Chiromo is a welcome sight after the desolate beauty of the Shiré below that point and the eternal sand and pebble beaches of the Zambesi. It is, moreover, a great centre of hospitality, the British and Portuguese elements fraternising in the most cordial manner, and vying with each other in their kind attentions to passing travellers. Close to Chiromo lies the famous

"Elephant Marsh," a great natural resort of wild animals, and not long since a chosen haunt of the mighty beasts from which it derives its name. Messrs. H. A. Hillier and H. C. McDonald, the officials then in charge of British Chiromo, were both of them very keen and successful sportsmen, and some of their trophies were enough to fill the hearts of less fortunate hunters with mingled admiration and despair. It was near Chiromo that Mr. McDonald shot the finest buffalo ever killed in that part of Africa—indeed, I believe that in some respects its head was the best ever procured by a European in any part of the continent. Professional hunters and trophy-seekers, however, eventually began to play cruel havoc with the fauna of the marsh; and, owing to the indiscriminate fashion in which elephants, buffaloes, and other wild animals were being shot down there some time ago, the Administration of the Protectorate was constrained to declare the place a Government Game Reserve. The results of this excellent measure are already becoming manifest, elephants having been seen again in the neighbourhood on several recent occasions, though it is perhaps too much to hope that they will ever return to it in quite their former numbers.

On the whole, the journey up the Zambesi and Shiré rivers was very interesting to me as a new-comer, but at the same time I am bound to add that it was neither a speedy nor a comfortable one. In the first place, the heat was intense, and at times only just endurable, the thermometer often marking as much as 110 degrees in the

shade. Mosquitoes again were a great source of annoyance. The dangerous character of the Zambesi-Shiré waterway makes its navigation by night a thing to be avoided; and, on the approach of darkness, the river-boats are nearly always tied up to the bank, not infrequently in the midst of reeds, or under a fringe of outgrowing bush, whence the dreaded insects issue forth in myriads. Personally I enjoy a rare immunity from the attentions of these pests, and have often slept unprotected by curtains both in India and in Africa without suffering much inconvenience. But I have done this only during periods of exceptional heat, when the interior of the mosquito-net became intolerably stuffy; nor should I recommend anybody else to try the same plan. As a matter of fact, it is most unwise in any case to dispense with curtains, which not only serve as a protection against insects, but help in a great measure to keep off the malarial miasma.¹

Our progress was, as I have said, very slow, being continually interrupted by breakdowns on the part of the machinery, and by bumps, strandings, and other untoward incidents, which were, however, taken quite coolly and as matters of course by captain, crew, and passengers alike. Fortunately, in Central Africa time is of small value, and nobody grudges delays. I must nevertheless own to having felt considerably astonished one evening when the steamer, then running at

¹ Since this was written, the researches of Dr. Mauson, of Surgeon-Major Ross, and other scientists, have disproved the existence of any such thing as a malarial miasma or cloud, as the idea was formerly understood.

full speed, solemnly reversed her engines and went some hundreds of yards astern in order to retrieve the hat of a passenger which had fallen overboard!

These river-steamers are rather oddly shaped and ride very low in the water, their general appearance instantly recalling Mr. Rudyard Kipling's forcible, if irreverent, metaphor of a flat-iron, originally applied, I think, to one of the Zambesi gunboats. Their internal arrangements, however, various difficulties considered, are better than might have been expected; and, taken for all in all, they certainly constitute a vast improvement on the clumsy, roofed canoes in which Europeans were formerly obliged to make the ascent of the rivers, and which are still occasionally used by eccentric travellers, or by those who have missed a steamer or who wish to stop and shoot on the way. These canoes—mere leaking, rickety hulks, with a rough box or grass thatch over the stern end—are termed "house-boats," on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, I suppose, for anything less like the gay gondolas of Henley it would be impossible to picture.

On the occasion of this my first arrival in the country, I was able to proceed up-river from Chiromo in another steamer; but two years later, when returning from leave of absence, I and a companion were less fortunate, the water above Chiromo being too shallow at that season to admit the safe passage of anything bigger than a house-boat. Only one of these was available, a wretched tub with no rudder, facetiously known

as the *Speedy*. We suffered much in this craft, I remember, for three days and nights from heat, thirst, mosquitoes, cramped space, a perspiring crew, and other annoyances. Also we were able to bring with us only a small proportion of our luggage, and in the hurry of departure several very necessary articles were left behind. Even what we took was nearly ruined by the water, which leaked freely through the bottom of the boat, and was flung about in every direction from the paddles. In some respects, nevertheless, I rather enjoyed this trip. In the first place, we were independent of other people's arrangements. We could stop when and where we chose, to shoot or stroll along the banks. It was pleasant, too, when travelling in the comparative cool of the evening, to watch the tall palms slip astern of us ; to note, later, the pure radiance of the moon on the river, and to listen to the quaint, rhythmic song of the boatmen as they plied their short paddles. Indeed, travelling by water has, even at its worst, a certain indefinable charm which makes it, in my opinion, a more agreeable method of locomotion in a country like Central Africa than journeying overland.

Unfortunately, the risk, delay, and expense attending the importation of live-stock by the Zambesi - Shiré waterway, combined with the presence of the tsetse fly and the "unridable" nature of the bush, have hitherto prevented the introduction of horses into the country on anything like a large scale. It is difficult to imagine how sorely these animals can be missed, until one

has tried to get about a wild country without their help. There are, it is true, a few horses at Blantyre, and a few more at Zomba; but the principal means of conveyance all over Nyasaland and the Shiré districts is the "machilla," or hammock, a simple contrivance of canvas and bamboo, carried on the shoulders of natives. An average machilla team for a fairly long journey may consist of from fifteen to twenty men; and, if these are up to their work and have good roads before them, they will travel at a very creditable rate indeed, and will cover thirty or forty miles without difficulty between dawn and dusk. As a rule, the machilla is carried by only two men at a time, one at each end of the pole, the remainder trotting behind and relieving the carriers at intervals of ten minutes or so. The whole team, as it speeds, keeps up a continual chorus, varying from mere individual yells to actual songs of regular beat and rhythm, often tuneful and of quaint significance, wherein every man takes concerted part. In view of the fact that popular legends and beliefs are often embodied in such refrains as these, I have thought that it might be worth while to translate and classify some of them; but, so far as I am aware, no attempt in this direction has yet been made.

To return to machilla-travelling. There are men who profess to like it. There are even men who can sleep through it, which must be very convenient. Personally, I confess I have always found it rather wearisome, even under the best of conditions—that is to say, with a good machilla

and a private team ; while under reverse circumstances, it is often downright abomination.

The point at which travellers bound for the Shiré Highlands and Lake Nyasa enter on the overland section of their journey is Katungas, or Chikwawa, a station lying on the Shiré River not far below the Murchison Cataracts. At Katungas, therefore, I first made the acquaintance of a machilla. The trip thence to Blantyre, as ill-luck would have it, was attended by many small annoyances, and was generally one of the most uncomfortable that I have ever experienced. The machilla itself was old, rotten, destitute of covering, destitute of cushions, and, being badly slung, had a chronic list to one side. The carriers were a scratch lot, picked up at haphazard, owing allegiance to nobody in particular, least of all to a new arrival like myself. For some distance after the start, I found distraction in the novel charm of the scenery ; but when that began to pall, I was quite at the end of my resources. Reading was not worth the trouble it entailed, the unsteady motion of the machilla making it a matter of extreme difficulty to distinguish consecutive words. Sleep was baffled by the incessant shouting of the carriers ; and against frequent halts and delays on their part I was powerless to protest, owing to my total ignorance of their language. The Chikwawa-Blantyre road is very steep and very stony ; and whenever we came to a place steeper and more stony than usual, the machilla was dropped with an abruptness which, to my exasperated mind, seemed to indicate

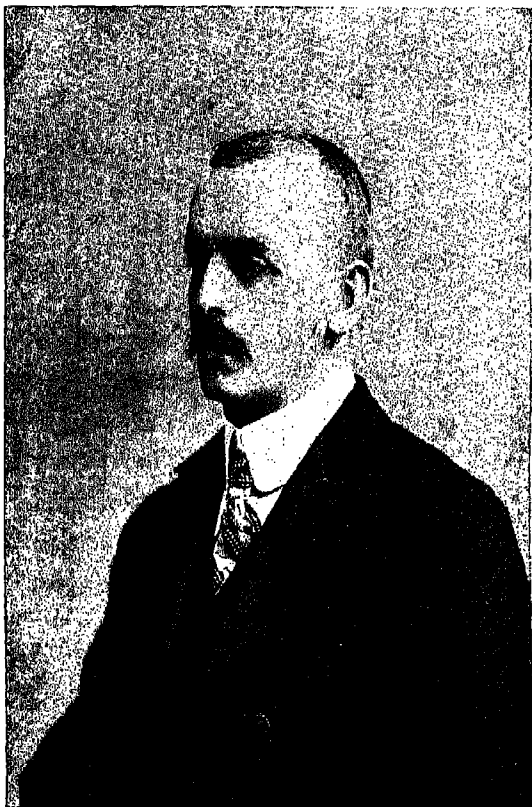
malice prépense on the part of the carriers. I might certainly have got out and thrashed them, but I had been warned that in such a case they would probably bolt altogether, and leave me to make my way through the bush on foot. There was obviously nothing to do but bear it with or without the proverbial grin.

When we had traversed about eight or nine miles, the last straw made its appearance in the shape of a storm. The sky, which at starting had been quite pure and cloudless, suddenly assumed the colour of bruised flesh, and a moment later rain began to fall; not the steady rain of temperate countries, but the mad hurricane of the tropics, which tears through heavy forests like a charge of buckshot, and whips the solid soil two or three feet into the air. It is possible to get very wet indeed in an English shower or a Scotch mist, but then the wetting is a more or less gradual process. It may take three minutes, or five, or ten. Tropical rain, in its prime fury, on the other hand, drenches a man almost as instantly and completely as if a tub of water had been thrown over him from a third-floor window.

Such extreme violence is not, as a matter of fact, by any means characteristic of rain in the hilly parts of Central Africa; but in this instance, possibly because we were still within a short distance of the low levels, the tempest broke upon us with all the impetuosity of an Indian "bursat." Almost before I could pull a rug over me, I was saturated, the surplus water draining off my person into the bottom of the machilla,

where it soon collected in a cold, spreading pool at the small of my back. To call a halt and bale out the machilla proved to be mere waste of time ; for almost before I could resettle myself in the thing, it was again waterlogged. It was likewise useless to get out and run ; for, being in soft condition after the forced inactivity of a long sea-voyage, I found it impossible to maintain anything like a good rate of speed over the wet, heavy roads ; and, as I had started late and was particularly anxious to reach my destination before nightfall, there was nothing for it but to resign myself to the sodden hammock and lie there, cramped and chilly, for the next three or four hours. Some time before we reached Blantyre, however, the weather cleared, and the evening sun, shining with sudden brightness, revealed for the first time the singularly beautiful nature of the country through which we were passing. Far beneath us, the valley of the Shiré lay flat and dim, only a few stray points of light marking the curves of the river. On either hand stretched a long panorama of ridge and ravine, covered everywhere with trees, not individually of great size, yet wonderfully picturesque in their massed abundance, filling all the gorges with softness and spreading their feathery outlines along the top of every hill.

Blantyre itself, although situated among the same bold surroundings as those which I have described, has suffered considerably, from an æsthetic point of view, by the clearing away of so much of the bush and forest which formerly grew



H. R. WALLIS, ESQ.

Sometime H.M. Acting Deputy-Commissioner for British
Central Africa.

about it. My first view of the town impressed me unfavourably. Preconceived ideas are wont to be misleading, and such ideas as I had entertained regarding Blantyre proved to be hopelessly at variance with the reality. I had imagined something primitive and romantic—winding paths, mud houses thatched with grass or shingles and overshadowed by luxuriant vegetation. What I saw was a broad and rather dreary amphitheatre set among hills, covered in places with patches of scrub of coffee, in other places quite bare. Hard red roads traversed this amphitheatre, and ran between three or four straggling and widely-separated groups of houses, stores and offices, built of brick and roofed with hideous tin.

However, if brick and tin are ugly things to look upon, they are yet, as everybody knows, the outward and visible signs of progress. An old resident has since assured me that, when there were no more than a dozen houses in Blantyre, it was a very picturesque and charming spot, which is quite possible. Since then it has sacrificed appearances to more material ends, and is now undoubtedly an important place of its kind, perhaps the most important in the Protectorate, being the centre of the coffee-planting industry, and the head-quarters of the Church of Scotland Mission, and of the African Lakes Corporation and other trading firms.

The Mission grounds form one of the few really pretty spots to be found in Blantyre. The remarkably handsome church, designed and built by Dr. Ruffelle Scott, with its lofty turrets and

white cupola, would be a striking object anywhere, and is little short of a marvel in Central Africa. It is worth while to note that this church was constructed entirely by native labour, and from materials obtained on the spot. It is approached from the Blantyre side by a long avenue of blue gums, while behind it stands the thatched and creeper-covered Mission House, with its adjoining schools, surrounded by trim lawns full of cypresses, poinsettias, and lemon-trees.

On this occasion, I stayed only two or three days at Blantyre before going on to Zomba, where I arrived on January 8, 1898.

CHAPTER IV

ZOMBA STATION AND DISTRICT

CONTRARY to my expectation, I was detained in Zomba for seven or eight months after my first arrival there ; and as I revisited the place several times before being finally appointed to take charge of the district in 1900, I am somewhat better acquainted with the neighbourhood of Zomba and of the Shiré Highlands generally than with any other part of the country. Roughly speaking, the Protectorate falls into three great natural divisions, namely, the Lake, the Hills, and the River ; and it usually happens that an official is stationed more or less permanently in one or other of these divisions for the greater part of his service, in order that he may acquire as intimate a knowledge as possible of the particular section of territory which he helps to govern. Circumstances then ordained that I should pass most of my time in the hills ; and I have, in fact, been stationed at different periods in each of the three districts of the Shiré Highlands—Zomba, Blantyre, and Mlanje.

The River (Shiré) I know only from having passed up and down it more or less frequently ;

but of Lake Nyasa I cherish very definite and pleasant memories, for I was transferred to Nkata Bay, as I shall recount later on, about the middle of 1900, and spent there some of the pleasantest months that have fallen to my lot in Africa. On the occasion of my first arrival in the country, I was consumed, as many new-comers are, with a desire to penetrate forthwith into the uttermost parts of the wilderness; and I by no means relished the idea of stopping at Zomba, which (being the head-quarters of the Government, and having a European population of some thirty-five or forty souls, with a church, a billiard-room, and a tennis-court) always seemed to me either too civilised or not civilised enough, according as the mood of Quixote or of Sancho happened to prevail.

However, I soon found that Zomba possessed certain advantages which went far to counter-balance the defect to which I have made reference. To begin with, it occupies a singularly beautiful position on the slopes of Zomba Mountain, looking out over wide forest plains to Lake Chilwa and the Mlanje plateau. Then the township itself has grown up simply in a haphazard and rather picturesque manner, instead of having been "laid out"—a dreadful expression which always strikes me as being peculiarly appropriate to the stiff, rectangular arrangement so characteristic of many colonial centres. The individual houses, it is true, are built of the same prosaic materials as at Blantyre and elsewhere, but the general effect is more pleasing. The roofs are

painted a warm red, which, at a little distance, gives them the appearance of being tiled, while the brick walls are disguised under a profusion of *Granadilla*, *Bougainvillaea*, and other creepers. At the southern end of the settlement lies the military camp, distant about a mile and a half from the civil quarters, which form the body of the township, and include the Treasury, Audit, Post, Printing and other offices, besides dwelling-houses.

Of course, settlements which have been formed gradually and without reference to any particular design have this disadvantage, that they are rather expensive and difficult to keep in a proper state of order. In the case of Zomba, for example, buildings have been erected here and there from one year to another as the necessity for them has arisen, often at considerable distances apart, on opposite sides of ravines or well up on the slopes of the hill. The area, therefore, which has to be kept clear of bush and weeds is comparatively large, and the number of roads and paths is multiplied out of all proportion to the number of houses.

The nucleus of the modern Zomba is the Old Residency, which was built, I think, by Consul Foote, near the deep, narrow ravine of the Mlungusi River. Architecturally, the Old Residency is the only striking feature of Zomba, and is indeed a notable landmark, being two stories high (a rare thing in Central Africa), and made further conspicuous by the peaked turrets which flank its angles, as in some old *château* of

Touraine.¹ The rather "careless ordered" gardens of the Residency are extremely picturesque, and exhibit various kinds of tropical plants in odd juxtaposition with the vegetation of colder regions—conifers and so forth. Among the latter, one of the most pleasing is the exquisite Mlanje pine or cedar (*Widdringtonia Whyter*), with its abundant feathery foliage, so tender in colour as to look nearly grey against the dense velvety-olive of the cypresses. This beautiful conifer is markedly local in its distribution, growing indigenously, to the best of my belief, on the Mlanje hills alone, but it is now quite common in many other parts of the Protectorate where it has been artificially introduced.

With sufficient funds, Zomba might indeed be turned into a veritable beauty spot. A copious perennial supply of water is at hand; the climate is favourable; the soil rich; almost anything will grow there—in fact, no gardener could wish for a better field. Several of the finer English fruits, such as peaches, can be successfully raised. Vegetables of all sorts flourish exceedingly, and, with a few exceptions, every flower to which we are accustomed at home will thrive in this remote spot: roses, lilies, violets, honeysuckle, geraniums, petunias, carnations, and a hundred other familiar blooms. Many, like the crimson poinsettia, are far easier to cultivate than in colder regions, while, of course, there are a number of beautiful

¹ A "new residency" has since been built—a very roomy and comfortable, but at the same time peculiarly hideous structure.

indigenous plants peculiar to the country. The only thing, indeed, that need be lacking to a well-kept compound in this part of Central Africa, is the brilliant verdure of English turf; and even here a passable substitute has been found in the dub-grass imported from India, which grows well almost anywhere, and, when carefully tended, makes a very neat lawn, besides affording excellent fodder.

Living at one time was wonderfully cheap at Zomba, and indeed everywhere else in the Protectorate. Perhaps it may amuse my readers to hear how prices ruled when I first came to the country. A shilling, in that age of simplicity, would purchase any of the following: forty eggs, six chickens, eight or ten pigeons, 30 lbs. of English potatoes, 50 lbs. of sweet potatoes, 50 lbs. of cleaned maize, 50 lbs. of native flour. Goats cost about half-a-crown, sheep three or four shillings apiece. Cattle might be had at times for thirty shillings a head. Sixpence would buy a large basket of cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes or bananas. Pineapples cost a penny each. Native curios could be got almost for the asking. Unskilled labour commanded three shillings per month per man; and this is still its official value as an alternative to cash payment of hut taxes, although planters and traders often have to pay more dearly, while the price of skilled labour has everywhere risen. The whole question of the labour supply now constitutes in truth a most serious and difficult problem, but it is naturally in its relation to the Government

and to the European industries that it presses most urgently, and I shall therefore postpone discussion concerning it to a subsequent chapter.

Even in the case of local produce and live stock, however, prices have of late advanced very considerably all round; and for those who are obliged, as many are, to entertain frequently on small incomes, this is beginning to be a serious matter. Domestic fowls, for example, which have always been a staple of European diet in Central Africa, and which still constitute (except during the hunting season, when venison is available) almost the only alternative to dear and unwholesome tinned foods, are diminishing to an alarming extent, not only in numbers but in size. The normal chicken of the country is in truth not much larger now-a-days than a blackbird, for the sufficient reason that the demand for him is too pressing to admit of his being spared to attain mature proportions; and in the neighbourhood of the chief European centres, especially Blantyre, even these half-grown chickens are at times unprocurable. Other articles of food have similarly risen in value, and, on the whole, I should say that the expenses of housekeeping, in the Shiré Highlands at any rate, must be some 50 per cent. more than they were a few years since, although even now the country can fairly claim to be regarded as a comparatively inexpensive one so far as private living is concerned.

The climate of Zomba and of the Shiré plateau generally is another of its attractions; by which I mean simply that it is during a great part of the

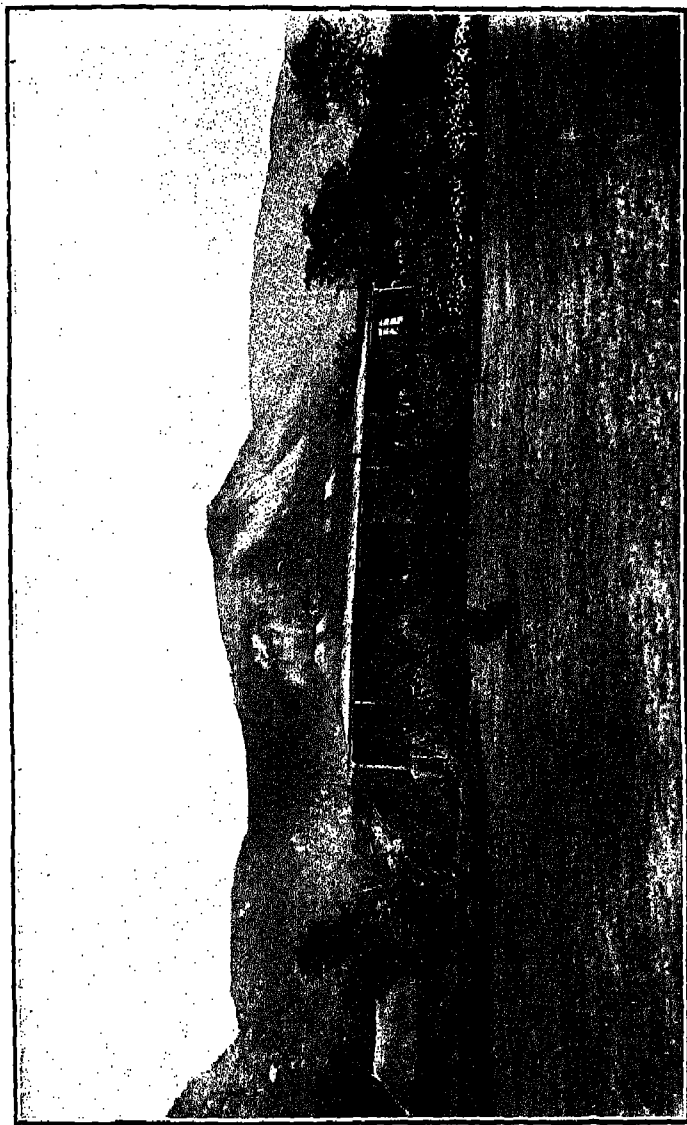


Photo.

THE AUTHOR'S HOUSE AT ZOMBA.

Mr. F. H. Salmon.

year a pleasant climate to live in. As for health, the whole of British Central Africa is more or less tarred with the same brush; and, while some districts are undoubtedly much better than others, it would scarcely be fair to pretend that the best of them is actually salubrious. In fact, we may safely assert that from ordinary malarial fever no person who stays in the country for any length of time, and very few of those who merely pass through it, can hope to escape. It is a thing which has to be reckoned with and endured; that is all. Some ancient travellers believed that the will of God had ordained this to be a perpetual barrier against the encroachment upon Africa of the restless and ambitious races of the Occident; and indeed there are certain parts of the continent, including most of Nyasaland, where it seems scarcely probable that white men will ever be able to make permanent homes for themselves and their families, as has been done south of the Zambesi for instance.

At the same time, the condition of things in British Central Africa has much improved in this direction of late years. When I first came to the country, permanent buildings—at any rate on out-stations—were the exception, and for many consecutive months I was never inside one at all. Now, on the other hand, wattle-and-daub are much less common than brick, and tents are reserved, as they ought to be, for travelling. Science again has progressed remarkably in investigating the phenomena of malarial affections and the methods by which they can be combated.

That the anopheles mosquito is a principal agent in spreading malaria has now been established beyond all doubt; and in regular settlements much can be done to minimise the risk of disease by simply getting rid of stagnant water, rank vegetation and other breeding-grounds of these insects. Moreover, while admitting that fever has acted more powerfully than anything else to check the advance of civilisation in Africa, I cannot help thinking that its terrors, as a mortal disease, are often somewhat exaggerated, and that sufficient allowance is not generally made for the follies and indiscretions to which, more directly than to the malady itself, so many fatal results are due.

Everybody, as I have said, must undergo an attack of fever in Central Africa sooner or later; but with proper precautions, comparatively few of those so stricken need actually lose their lives; and I confess that pity seems to me to be wasted on people who persist in exposing themselves to a tropical sun with nothing but cloth caps on their heads, or in going to hunt with a temperature of 104 degrees, as I have known some to do. Personally, I may say that I am more predisposed to fever than most men. During the first two years of my residence in Central Africa, I suffered from it repeatedly, both in its low and acute forms; but I never gave the disease more chance of killing me than I could help; and, candidly, I am disposed to regard it, in its ordinary form, as a more endurable evil than toothache or a cold in the head. I say advisedly in its ordinary form, for there is a peculiar manifestation

of malaria known as Haemoglobinuric or Black-Fever, differing in certain notable particulars from other tropical fevers, which is commonly met with in Nyasaland as well as in Madagascar, in some parts of West Africa, and in Central America.

Little seems to be definitely known concerning the origin and causes of this fearful malady. In several respects, it is a curiously perverse affection, being more characteristic of the hills than of the plains, and attacking robust and energetic men rather than those of feeble physique and sedentary habits. New arrivals, again, are far less liable to contract it than those who have spent two or three years in the country, while women hardly ever suffer from it at all.¹ Another odd and most sinister feature of Blackwater is that one attack predisposes to another, while the risk increases greatly with every recurrence of the disease. Its most marked characteristics are jaundice over the whole body, persistent vomiting, and the dark, bloody urine which has gained for it its popular name. The mortality among Blackwater patients was formerly appalling—about 40 per cent. of those stricken for the first time; but of late years this fever has been treated with increasing success by the medical staff of the Administration; and, judging from the most recent cases that I can remember, without being able to consult statistics, I should say that the proportion terminating fatally is now not more than 15 or 20 per cent.

¹ Nor do the natives, although they are frequently attacked by ordinary malarial fever.

The coolest months in British Central Africa are usually May, June and July, and it is impossible to wish for more delightful weather than may then be experienced at Zomba. Even in the middle of the hot season, however (about October and November), the thermometer rarely rises above 90 degrees. This refers, of course, only to the station itself. Zomba district is in a very different case, embracing, as at present defined, some 900 square miles of territory,¹ and varying in sea-level from 6900 feet at the highest point, where I have often shivered under three or four blankets, to 1700 feet at the edge of Lake Chilwa, where, on occasions, it can be almost as hot as anywhere in Africa. Formerly, the sub-district of Chikala at the north-western extremity of Chilwa was reckoned as an integral part of Zomba, but it was afterwards declared by His Majesty's Commissioner to be a separate district. I was in charge of Zomba at that time, and somewhat regretted this restriction of my province, the more so because Chikala, especially that part of it which lies along the Portuguese frontier, affords some of the very best shooting in Central Africa; and when it formed part of my own district I was able to travel through it whenever I chose, which, of course, I could not do after it had been withdrawn from my control.

The elevation of Zomba district varying as I

¹ This is much less than the average area of the Protectorate districts. West Nyasa, to which I was subsequently transferred, is nearly 6000 square miles in extent, and North Nyasa and Central Angoniland very little less.

have said, the scenery, of course, varies in proportion, some of it even approximating in general features to the mountainous regions of Northern Europe, while still preserving, in certain minor details, the strange characteristics of the torrid zone. Such are the hills which rise close behind Zomba township, and such are those of Mlanje directly opposite—the most conspicuous points of the Shiré Highlands—torn and split by the stress of ages into a multitude of fantastic peaks, their naked tops laced with the glitter of torrents, their bases dark with forests of cedar and mimosa and roughened by monstrous outcrops of stone. The great precipices which occur at various points along the Zomba and Mlanje ranges are perhaps better worth seeing than anything between the Zambesi and Lake Nyasa. Their general appearance betokens a succession of landslips, whereby the scarp of the hills has abruptly subsided, piling the lower levels with a prodigious *débris*, and leaving behind it several hundred feet of scarred and naked rock. Many of these places are semicircular, or even of horseshoe shape, so that light is almost wholly excluded from their remoter parts, save when, at certain hours, the sun enters for a few moments and floods the whole interior with a brief, lovely irradiation. The bottom of such an abyss is usually filled with a massed profusion of trees, growing thinner as the cliff rises, until, at its sheerest point, only a few mimosas project irregularly from the seams and ledges of stone, their pale upright stems showing like so many candles, set in a

perpetual twilight. Outside and above, fair grass lands curl about the pit and deck its rim with a thousand flowers, of which, perhaps, the most common are the little yellow immortelles—such as we are accustomed to see on humble graves at home.

^ Not less charming is the country which lies between the higher peaks—a wonderland of natural meadows and undulating downs ; of small rounded knolls studded over with fragments of rock ; of hollows filled with thick sweet grass, and intersected by bushy ravines and hidden waters. This is what is known as "Jack in the Beanstalk " country. The general aspect of things up there is strongly reminiscent of home. The little brooks, tumbling and turning at the bottom of deep channels, are so exactly like trout-streams that I have been impelled to fish them, though I never caught anything worth preserving. The air is keen and wholesome. There is a bird upon the hills whose name I do not know, but whose voice is the voice of a moorland lark. A few rough stone walls, a few sheep, and one might really be in Scotland or in Yorkshire 8000 miles away. During the wet season, the hills and valleys are at times so smothered in mist that it is exceedingly easy to lose one's way even on most familiar ground. The whole face of the country seems to be altered, the trees take strange shapes, paths lead nowhere. Even rocks change their outlines at our approach like unstable things. The multitudinous voices of the hills are choked as by a shroud. There is no song of

birds; no hum and twitter of insects; no sound of life at all; only the muffled noise of water drumming on leaf and stone. It is like a place of ghosts. Presently, a high cold wind lashes forth, opening a rift of watery light and tender landscape vistas; but next moment the fog closes heavily, and again the ways are dark before us. The season of the rains begins approximately in November, and lasts until March or April. During this time all manner of vegetation flourishes in rank abundance. Hunting, impossible on the plains, is then attended by serious difficulties even on the hills; for in order to reach the tolerably open heights, a way has to be pushed or cut through drenching grass eight or ten feet high, and through deep ravines choked with a thick growth of bush.

There are compensations, of course, for the general discomforts of locomotion at this season. Many of the flowers which make their appearance during the rains are of a singular and exquisite beauty. The hollows of the hills are full of the great creamy petals of the *chiari*.¹ The trees are netted over with graceful creepers. Everywhere in the grass appear the starry cones of the *orchidaceae*, and at every step the foot of the wanderer treads to earth some lowly, lovely plant, hidden from his sight like the unseen flower of Gray. More homely, but not less welcome, the bracken covers whole hillsides with its familiar fronds.

¹ A plant with leaves rather like those of a rhododendron and a blossom like the passion-flower.

At sight of it, one looks instinctively for rabbits, which I need hardly say are absent, unless, indeed, one reckons the rock-rabbit, popularly supposed to be the coney of Scripture. A notable little fellow is he, a frequenter of high and broken ground, like his cousin the Alpine marmot. I have watched him often, and shot him occasionally, for his flesh is not unpalatable. The most curious anatomical trait about the rock-rabbit is the structure of his feet and toes, which indicate the animal's habits as clearly as the trades of men are shown by their hands. The fore-feet have each three regular toes and a rudimentary one, the latter so imperfectly developed that it needs to be carefully looked for. The hind-feet show three toes apiece, but here the rudimentary member is absent. The toes are very short, blunt, black and leathery, the nails so deeply embedded and worn that it is scarcely possible to distinguish them from the pads on which they are set, except in the case of the inside hind-toe, which is provided with a long, well-developed nail or claw. This solitary hind-claw is also met with in the lemur.

A well-known Indian naturalist, who has written many delightful books under the signature E. H. A., assures us that he was for some time at a loss to account for this appendage, but finally decided that the lemur must use it to scratch off redundant fleas. No doubt the lemur does so, but it is difficult to agree that this is the *raison d'être* of the claw. Lemurs climb trees, coneys climb rocks, and to each the long hind-claw must be of the greatest assistance in this

direction. Enough, however, of the rock-rabbit ; there are others among the fauna of these hills not less deserving of attention than he.

The dear, tiny klipspringer (*Oreotragus saltator*) lives there amongst the stoniest precipices he can find. Very amusing to watch are the gambols of this little African chamois, as he frisks confidently from ledge to ledge, or stands for an instant stiffly poised against the sky-line, his four diminutive hoofs gathered underneath him, looking for all the world like a toy animal from a Noah's Ark. I once had a pet klipspringer, which was brought to me as a very young kid, and which I reared by hand, feeding him with milk from a sponge until he was old enough to forage for himself in the garden. He grew wonderfully tame, and would lie quietly down on my hearthrug or trot about after me, on the extreme points of his hoofs, as is the habit of the klipspringer, venting his nascent activity from time to time in sudden, wild jumps. His courage was remarkable, and he would instantly attack any strange dog, however big, that approached him too closely. Had he lived, I would certainly have brought him home with me to England, but to my grief and disappointment he fell a victim to pneumonia after I had kept him for five months.

Bush-buck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) again are very fond of the hills, though they do not, like the klipspringer, entirely confine themselves to such places. I have often seen these pretty buck on Mlanje, but their habitat *par excellence* would seem to be the Zomba plateau, where they are

extremely plentiful and may be shot during the rainy season, when nearly all other game is hidden in the dense vegetation of the plains.

Bird life is well represented on these plateaux. There are one or two hawks and falcons,¹ while the great white-necked raven is constantly seen and still more constantly heard. The tiny widow-bird (*Vidua paradisica*) is much in evidence, fluttering hither and thither among the flowers and grasses, together with numerous finches, buntings, and other small creatures of the feathered world. The game birds include two species of quail, and at least two species of francolin—one of the latter very similar in appearance to an English partridge, though somewhat larger, the other a remarkably handsome bird, about the size of a full-grown cock-grouse, with scarlet beak and legs, a scarlet patch on each eye, and plumage of black, ash-grey and cream beautifully contrasted. Both quail and francolin fly strongly and afford, when flushed, very pretty shots; but it is scarcely worth anybody's while to go out specially in pursuit of these birds, as their inveterate habit of running makes it almost impossible to secure a heavy or even a respectable bag. Singing birds abound on the hills, some with truly sweet voices recalling those of the lark and the thrush, and giving ample refutation to the too literally accepted statement of earlier travellers that there are no songsters in the tropics.

¹ Sir Harry Johnston doubts the existence of raptorial birds on Zomba Mountain, but I have seen them there myself.

It must be said that Zomba plateau has changed a good deal since I first made its acquaintance. It was then destitute of any kind of road or human dwelling—an absolute solitude ; but there are now two or three cottages there, and a track has been cleared right round it, while a sufficiently good road leads down to Zomba, so that an hour or two will take one from the uplands to the very different world which lies beneath.

Somewhat monotonous in their general aspect, the plains are yet not without a real beauty of their own, and are also much more characteristic of Africa than are the hills, which, as I have said, tend rather to remind one of Europe. At the same time these plains are very unlike what many people imagine them to be. For some reason or other, the whole interior of tropical Africa seems to be popularly conceived of as a dense, gloomy, luxuriant, almost impenetrable forest. Now, much of Inner Africa does abound with jungle of this essentially tropical type—the Congo Basin, for instance, and many parts of West Africa ; but in Nyasaland, except perhaps in one or two isolated spots, nothing of the kind is to be found. It is true that the general appearance of the country is that of a remarkably well-wooded region ; for, besides grass and scrub, trees of an inferior type abound everywhere, and, despite their individual insignificance, grow so close together and cover such enormous tracts that the eye, in many cases, can scarcely detect a single break in their expanse. Indeed, if the term

"well-wooded" be taken in this sense, that is to say, in relation merely to abundance of trees, and without reference to their size, then Nyasaland deserves the epithet better than most parts of the world. But, on closer inspection, the traveller cannot fail to remark how poorly the actual growth of these trees compares with the scenic effect which they produce when viewed from a distance. The majority are not much larger than a birch, with thin, dry, wiry stems, and rather sparse foliage. They are not matted and netted after the fashion of regular tropical vegetation; their branches do not so intertwine as to exclude the light, nor as a rule do they exhibit any strange or fantastic peculiarities. In fact, they are decidedly commonplace. There is little doubt that the perpetual cutting and burning of timber, by which the natives prepare the ground for their crops, have operated powerfully to bring about this state of things. Sir Harry Johnston seems inclined to believe that the country was at one time covered with very dense forest, which, being gradually destroyed by man, was replaced by tough and meagre vegetation, better fitted to resist the action of the bush fires.

However that may be, the typical low-lying forest of Nyasaland at present is such as I have described. I say advisedly the *typical* forest, for it must not be supposed that grand or curious or beautiful forms are quite unrepresented. In nearly all the watercourses we have very fine trees indeed.¹

¹ The splendid "Mungongomwe," for instance, and the Ukuyi and Mwenye trees.

Here and there, too, you shall see the baobab, grotesque, monstrous, almost animal-like with its ash-grey bark and swollen limbs ; the aptly-named Candelabra Euphorbia ; the magnificent Albizzia (*Albizzia moluccana*) ; the sausage-tree hung thickly with the hard, bulky fruit from which it derives its name ; the Borassus, Raphia, and Hyphaene palms ; and the sweet, flat-topped mimosas, growing with a certain quaint formality and decision of outline, almost suggestive of the topiary art as practised of old on the yew-trees and box hedges of English gardens.

CHAPTER V

LAKE NYASA

IN July 1898 I was transferred from Zomba to Mlanje, to replace the late Gilbert Mortimer Hunt, who had been for some time in charge of the Fort Lister division of that district, and died there of malarial fever in the month mentioned. Of all men, Hunt had seemed to me most unlikely to be destined for such a fate, being of a remarkably strong and active frame, with a taste for athletic exercise which had been fostered at Eton and Cambridge. I had known him in England, and was much saddened by his untimely end, shortly followed as it was by that of another old friend of mine, the late Arnold Drummond-Hay.

There are two Government stations on Mlanje. Fort Lister, already mentioned, stands on the old slave route through the north end of the range, while the head-quarters of the district are at Fort Anderson, some twenty-six miles to the south. I now took up my residence at the latter place. Both Fort Lister and Fort Anderson occupy positions of great natural beauty. The scenery in general is of much the same character as at Zomba, but on a somewhat larger scale, the main

peak of Mlanje reaching a height of no less than 9000 feet. Mlanje is usually considered to be a comparatively healthy district; so much so that part of the plateau is used as a sanatorium by invalids from Blantyre and elsewhere; but, oddly enough, I never, during my whole residence in Africa, suffered from fever so constantly as I did when I was stationed there. Indeed, during nearly four consecutive months I was never well for a single day. It was, therefore, rather a relief to me when, in October 1898, I was again transferred, first of all to Blantyre and shortly afterwards to Nkata Bay, which is the Government station for the district of West Nyasa.

The immediate objective of the traveller who approaches Nyasa from the south is Fort Johnston, which stands on the right bank of the Upper Shiré River, within a few miles of the lake itself. Directly below Fort Johnston, the Shiré runs through Pamalombe, a sheet of water some eighteen miles long by twelve or thirteen miles broad, very shallow for the most part and surrounded by hills. A curious barrier, formed by accumulations of sedge, sand, and drift-wood, intersects this great pool, and, when viewed from the deck of a passing boat, has the effect of considerably reducing the apparent area of water, being commonly mistaken for the shore itself. The whole bottom of Pamalombe is, in fact, nothing but a shifting mass of detritus, which at the northern extremity crops up to within a few inches of the surface, and, continually changing its position under pressure of cross-currents and

other influences, forms a serious obstacle to the passage of even the shallow - draught river steamers, which often have to be literally dug out and hauled over the bar by natives.

Fort Johnston is a place of considerable importance in Nyasaland, being the Government station for the district of South Nyasa, and the head-quarters of the Lake gunboats. Unlike most other Central African stations, which have grown up more or less at random, the present Fort Johnston was built *en bloc* to replace the abandoned settlement a few miles further up the river; and having been thus, so to say, made to order, it exhibits a coherence of design not to be found elsewhere in the country. With its rectangular plots, broad straight avenues, brick boundary-walls, and general air of order and precision, Fort Johnston looks in truth more like a German than an English settlement. But, however that may be, it is at any rate a standing monument to British perseverance. Rarely, I venture to say, have the malignant forces of Nature more severely tried human courage and resolution than has been the case in this obscure corner of tropical Africa. The original settlement, which was built, for reasons explained in a previous chapter, in the swampy wilderness opposite to Mponda's village, soon acquired an unenviable notoriety as the most unhealthy place in the Protectorate; and it was chiefly on account of the frightful rate of mortality which obtained there that the township was eventually removed to the site which it now occupies. Fortunately this change

of site has resulted even more beneficially than was anticipated.

The contrast between the Fort Johnston of to-day and the Fort Johnston of yester-year is already too marked to escape notice and too pleasant to be dismissed without a word of congratulation. In the matter of health the record of the new station compares not unfavourably with that of most others in British Central Africa. In the matter of completeness, as regards its internal arrangements, it is a model township, and its future importance as the point of junction between the river and the lake, is one with that of Nyasaland itself. As for the old fort, the last traces of it are vanishing fast. But whether it be only in my own imagination or not, the shadow of death seems to hang for ever over that lonely place. Nothing speaks more eloquently and more sadly of the cost of Empire than the abandoned settlements from which, as from stricken fields, the pioneers of her cause have withdrawn.

In the ruined houses, in the lowly graves, Nature, vindictive, slow to yield, records one more triumph in her long struggle against the courage and energy of man. Africa is strewn with such places—forgotten, and wisely forgotten. Well it is that the grass grows quickly over them; well that the memory of defeat is so short-lived. But here at least an antidote to the gloom of old associations is never far to seek. Half-an-hour's steaming or sailing brings the traveller to the bar of the Shiré, on the other side of which Nyasa

suddenly reveals its glorious blue. After the somewhat confined beauty of the river, with its frequent bends and dense environment of reeds, the vision of the open lake brings with it, on the instant, a subtle consciousness of expectation renewed, a joyous sense of freedom, space and light, more easily imagined than described. It is the threshold of a new stage of travel, and a threshold more enticing it would be difficult to picture.

The exceeding clearness of Nyasa renders it highly sensitive to gradations of light; and, with the advent of the sun, all those great waters wake and break into trembling colour running through every conceivable tone of blue and green, from lapis-lazuli to turquoise, and from emerald to chrysoprase. Islands are numerous here at the south end, most of them mere rocks covered with lichen and coarse grass. The coast-line is overshadowed by high mountain ranges, the alternate bluffs and hollows of which form a series of capes and inlets, of the latter Monkey Bay being perhaps the prettiest to be found south of Nkata. Beyond Monkey Bay the scenery changes. The edge of the lake, instead of showing as a clear line, is masked by great beds of reeds; and the sand, instead of confining itself to small, neat beaches, stretches far inland.

Kota Kota, the head-quarters of the Marimba district, is a typical example of this. Much has been done for the place by European supervision, especially by the planting of shade trees, etc., but nothing can quite redeem it from its native dreariness. It is one of those unfortunate locali-



'MATETE —THE REED—WEST ALASKA
From east in the distance

tics (Chinde is just such another) wholly given over to sand—loose white sand that drifts everywhere and penetrates everything, including the boots and eyes of the indignant visitor. How the Walrus and the Carpenter would have wept at Kota Kota! And yet no less a person than Jumbe, representative of the Sultan of Zanzibar, had his head-quarters there. Truly there is no accounting for tastes. The favourite pastime at Kota Kota is not, as elsewhere in Nyasaland, shooting, fishing, boating, or even tennis, but football! This game, than which it would be difficult to suggest any more apparently unsuited to the climate (which is excessively hot), was introduced some time ago by the few Europeans resident in the neighbourhood, and has since been taken up by the natives with wonderful zeal. The football played at Kota Kota, so far as a casual visitor can presume to judge (I witnessed only one "match"), has scarcely more in common with Association than with Rugby or any other known rules. Indeed, the distinguishing peculiarity of the game—a peculiarity due probably to local conditions—would seem to be its gay immunity from any rules or restrictions whatever. Certain unwritten laws there may be, but the mere cut-and-dry regulations of English codes are scouted by the Bantu athlete. No limit is apparently set to the extent of the ground, to the period of time to be covered, or to the number of those who participate in the game. The spectators may and do join in when and where they please, and continue to play as long as

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they can stand or see. The ball, once fairly committed to the *mêlée*, disappears for good. So, of course, does any man who has the misfortune to tumble down in a scrimmage. The goal-posts are rickety superfluities, a mere concession to appearances, heeded by nobody and nearly always prostrated at the first rush. The same abundant energy and the same lack of restraint are noticeable wherever these Central African natives take to any European game, and they take to European games of the rougher sort very readily indeed. I have seen them at Blantyre clubbing one another on the head, under pretence of playing hockey, just as they rend one another to pieces at Kota Kota under pretence of playing football. It is, however, only fair to add that they show great activity, enthusiasm and pluck; nor is there much reason to doubt that they might develop into really sound players, if they could only be induced to adopt a coherent system and a somewhat more chastened style.

North of Kota Kota the coast scenery again assumes a bold and rugged aspect. Nkata, which lies about half-way between the northern and southern extremities of the lake, is perhaps the prettiest spot to be found anywhere on the western shore, as it is undoubtedly the most healthy. Nkata Bay is a very diminutive harbour, smaller even than Monkey Bay, but affords safe anchorage in almost any weather. The depth of the lake along this part of the coast is nearly everywhere extreme, the scarp of the surrounding hills dropping in many places

absolutely sheer into the lake, without strand or ledge of any kind. Off Ruarwi, a short distance to the north of Nkata, recent soundings have registered a depth of no less than 418 fathoms; that is to say, 100 fathoms below sea-level. Nkata is the Government station for the extensive district of West Nyasa; but, despite the many attractions of the place, there is no European residence within thirty miles of it except the Government Boma¹ itself, which occupies a conspicuous and most picturesque site on one of the two steep and narrow ridges which lock the tiny bay on the north and south.

Nkata is only one of many similar creeks, which are here notched at frequent intervals all along the rock of the coast-line, edged by little crescent-shaped beaches as smooth and neat and white as the half-moon on a lady's finger-nail. Native villages cover these strips of sand, their homely aspect contrasting oddly with the stern isolation of the brick buildings above them, an isolation rendered more complete by the wall of rough stones, eight feet high and perhaps 100 yards by 50 in extent, which surrounds the Boma and its adjacent offices on all sides. The purity of the air at Nkata is remarkable, and the early mornings are often characterised by a tonic freshness hardly to be experienced anywhere else on the lake. Meteorological statistics go to prove that the average temperature of Nkata during the

¹ The word "Boma," meaning originally a camp or fortified position, is now generally applied by the natives of Central Africa to any Government station.

hot season is actually rather lower than that of Zomba in the Shiré Highlands. It is certainly lower than that of places lying at a greater altitude than itself along the lake shore. I have camped on the side of the hills behind Sisyá and elsewhere at elevations of from 500 to perhaps 1000 feet above the lake, and have found the air perceptibly hotter and closer than at Nkata, which must be within 100 feet or so of the water-level. The reason, I take it, lies in the fact that Nkata is situated at the mouth of a long cleft or gorge, having its origin somewhere among the mountains of the interior, and acting as a conduit to the westerly breezes which blow through it as through a tunnel.

From a hunter's point of view, the immediate neighbourhood of this charming spot is unsatisfactory. I have repeatedly explored the woods lying parallel to the coast for many miles, both north and south of Nkata Bay, without seeing any wild animals except monkeys and an occasional bush-buck. This is probably due to the exceeding density of these woods, to the absence of grass glades, and to the insufficiency of water. Game is plentiful elsewhere in the West Nyasa district, notably near the Duangwa River, at Matiti and in the Henga Valley. Elephants often pass close to Nkata, but then they are such wanderers that it is scarcely possible to count with certainty on finding them for two consecutive days in any given neighbourhood.

Fish frequent the lake in great abundance, and I have counted as many as thirteen distinct

varieties taken in Nkata Bay alone. Prominent among these is the exceedingly handsome blue perch (Chafinya). The colour of this fish on the sides is a deep lustrous purple; but the back and head are of a very pale azure, which can be seen at a great depth, moving through the water like a streak of phosphorescent light¹ as the fish swims to and fro.¹ This circumstance seems rather at variance with the theory of protective colouring in fishes, but it may be that the conspicuous hue of the blue perch is meant as a warning,² for its dorsal fins are so spiny that few birds would care to attack it. Other and smaller perch-like fishes abound among the rocks close to the shore. The huge "Mormorus," which often weighs 50 lbs. or more, is caught by the natives in basket-traps sunk in deep holes. Then there is the "Sangu," a very common fish with a large head like a pike, and a spotted mudfish (Kolo Kolo), with long feelers, which on being drawn from the water utters the oddest groans and croaks. The best sporting fish is a large-scaled, green and silvery creature (Kajenga), very elegantly shaped and running up to 4 or 5 lbs. in weight. It takes a minnow or spoon

¹ There is another perch, also blue, and much like the "Chafinya," which the Atonga call "Mbua." It is rather less brilliant in colour than the former, and is distinguished by very long dorsal and pectoral fins, the latter being shaped like the hind-wings of a swallow-tailed butterfly.

² Or possibly as a sexual ornament only. Darwin seems to think that this is the explanation of all bright colours in fishes, and says (*Descent of Man*, p. 342): "It is not, I believe, known that any fish, at least any fresh-water fish, is rejected from being distasteful to fish-devouring animals."

bait, and fights desperately when hooked. I have never, in spite of several attempts, succeeded in inducing any of the Nyasa fish to take an artificial fly, but they rise freely at the natural insect, so that it is perhaps merely a question of offering them a suitable pattern.

• A tiny fish known to the natives as "Usipa," swims in vast numbers near the surface of the water, where it leads an agitated and precarious existence between the incessant attacks of bigger fishes from below and of predatory birds from above, to say nothing of the nets of mankind. Usipa are delicious eating, and, with a squeeze of lemon, taste uncommonly like whitebait. Many other Nyasa fish are, however, equally good, some being no whit inferior in flavour to the choicest European kinds. The natives living on the shores of the lake are, of course, all practised fishermen, and employ various kinds of nets and traps, the latter most ingeniously constructed from grass and reeds. I have often been amazed at the skill and hardihood with which these fisher folk navigate their wretched little "dug-out" canoes through the furious storms which constantly descend upon Nyasa.

As a matter of fact, these dug-outs are probably safer than much more pretentious craft, but they neither look nor feel as if they were. Moreover, I never knew one which did not leak like a sieve. Yet the natives think nothing of taking them forty or fifty miles across the lake, and rarely meet with disaster. The aspect presented by one of these boats in a strong gale is ex-

ceedingly curious. Two or three of the crew are probably baling out water right and left, while the remainder, standing erect, paddle with desperate energy, buried up to their knees in a tumult of scud and spray, through which the hull of the canoe heaves and slips like the back of some monstrous dolphin. Every now and then an unusually big wave smashes right over the prow of the dug-out; and, for an appreciable fraction of time, craft and crew vanish entirely, to reappear, an instant later, in the trough of the passing swell. Considering the tempestuous character of the lake, it is quite remarkable that serious accidents are so uncommon there.

I do not think that any one of the gunboats or trading steamers has been actually wrecked; indeed, to the best of my recollection, the only European vessel ever lost on Nyasa was an open sailing-boat. On one occasion, however, I was myself upset and nearly drowned while beaching an iron barge at a place called Toto, between Nkata and Ruarwi. A very heavy sea was running at the time, and, the barge capsizing, we (myself and crew) were thrown headlong into the surf, from which we escaped with the greatest difficulty, the reflux of the tide dragging us back again and again among the rocks and shingle. Rarely have I felt more thankful than when I staggered on to *terra firma* again, bruised and choking, but safe. As my servant afterwards remarked, it was "too much plenty dangerous!"

The coast-line of West Nyasa for a distance of about 140 miles is occupied chiefly by Atonga,

with a few Wahenga in the north and some Achewa between the Duangwa and Karawi below Bandawe. This territory is administered by the Collector¹ at Nkata Bay, in the same manner as other districts throughout British Central Africa; but, in addition to it, the political division of West Nyasa nominally includes the great plateau of Northern (Mombera's) Angoniland, the inhabitants of which, for a variety of reasons, are not at present taxed or in any way directly governed by the officials of the Protectorate. I have twice visited Northern Angoniland; first in 1899, when I travelled from Bandawe *via* Hora through the southern and central portions of the plateau; and secondly in 1901, when, starting from Nkata, I visited Ekweneni, Mperembés, and the north and west. The ascent from the coast is rather arduous, the ground rising for 30 or 40 miles in a more or less continuous slope, scored with dry water-courses, littered with fragments of quartz, and covered with a very close, thick, wiry forest of dwarf masuku and other scrub. This belt of forest is practically uninhabited, a circumstance which at once accounts for the absence of artificial clearings; but even the natural open glades called "dambos," elsewhere common, are here so remarkably few and small that from many points it is impossible, even with the aid of field-glasses,

¹ The name given in British Central Africa, as in India, to magistrates in charge of districts. In North-Eastern Rhodesia they are called "Native Commissioners," and elsewhere "District Commissioners."

to discern a single break of any kind in the vast array of trees. At the edge of the plateau, however, between the Linyangwa and Kavusi rivers, the forest grows rapidly thinner, until it merges in a fine rolling down country, very much like the Shiré Highlands, although on a more extensive scale. Here, exactly as on the top of Zomba or Mlanje, are green salt-grass meadows; rough, swift brooks; detached clumps of trees, looking almost like English pheasant-coverts; hollows full of sage-brush, bracken and wild raspberry-caness; broken banks of pinky-brown earth; grey cliffs, rock-ribbed and sheer.

A little beyond this fair down country lies the plateau proper of Northern Angoniland. Originally the plateau, like the slopes beneath it, must have been covered with thick woods; but at the present day it is in many parts almost totally bare—a striking illustration of the completeness with which natives, by indiscriminately cutting down trees to make room for their gardens, will eventually deforest even the most heavily timbered areas. The scene of these ruthless agricultural operations is marked by an extensive patchwork of diverse colour: pale grey, where the ashes of lately burnt trees are lying to manure the soil beneath; bright green in the abandoned gardens, where fresh saplings are springing up again; a deep, rich umber in the newly-hoed fields; elsewhere dull yellow or white, where sand and quartz pebbles overlie the occasional sterile tracts. “Kopjes” are everywhere to be seen. I use the word, although not a

Central African one, because it exactly describes the isolated hillocks in question, covered at their bases with grass and bush, and terminating above in steep pinnacles of rock or masses of loose boulders. Ant-hills are another characteristic feature of the plateau. Like haycocks on a harvest-field, they litter the face of the land for miles. I was struck by their great size and also by their shape, which is evenly rounded instead of tapering to a point as in the ant-hills of the low country.

The climate of Northern Angoniland is delightful. The air has a singular sweetness ; and strong, bracing winds prevail. I should think, however, that it must be almost uncomfortably cold up there during May, June and July. Parts of the plateau are rather badly off for water, especially westward, beyond the Linyangwa, in the direction of North-Eastern Rhodesia. I made one attempt to penetrate this region (in October 1901), but was compelled for the above reason to beat a retreat after two days' travelling. I found no running water at all ; only here and there, at long intervals, a few half-stagnant pools. The natives assured me that this waterless tract extended for a great distance, and that no people lived there.

There are, on the plateau, two stations belonging to the Livingstonia (Free Church of Scotland) Mission—one at Hora and the other 28 miles to the north at Ekwendeni, a sufficiently good road connecting them. The Livingstonia missionaries have been at work for some time past among

Mombera's Angoni, and it certainly says a good deal for their methods that they should have succeeded in obtaining a footing and considerable influence among a people so savage. I have already related (in Chapter III.) how the Angoni originally came to what is now British Central Africa from the south; how, after long wanderings and many vicissitudes, they split up into several different clans; how each clan finally chose and occupied a separate locality; how they harried and plundered their weaker neighbours for a number of years; and how at last, by the advent of Imperial administration, their reign of terror was brought to a close. Of all the Angoni, Mombera's people alone, though included within the Protectorate, are still allowed to exercise a modified form of self-government, a privilege which, in its origin at any rate, was probably due rather to bias of circumstances than to anything else. Indeed, as recently as twelve or fifteen years since, and perhaps later, no branch of the Angoni was more conspicuous for its misdeeds than Mombera's, as the survivors and descendants of those who suffered at their hands can tell. It happened, however, partly owing to the geographical position of their country, which lies at a considerable distance from the principal administrative centres and well away from the main line of communication between north and south, that they never came into actual collision with the British forces when the Protectorate was established; and, since that time, the ascendancy gained over many of them by the Livingstonia

missionaries, the consciousness of a powerful European government in their vicinity, and the examples made of various recalcitrant chiefs—especially chiefs of other Angoni clans, such as Mpeseni—have contributed to keep them quiet.

The missionaries who first entered their country, however, must have put up with a good deal. Mombera himself was then alive and in the full exercise of despotic power—a hard, silent, imperious old man. Although imbued with a certain fear of the British as a collective body, against whose droll scruples on the subject of raiding weaker tribes it might not be safe to trespass too openly, he was yet by no means inclined to tolerate meddling in his internal affairs, or to show any respect for foreigners who chose to beard him in his den. I never saw Mombera myself, but persons who knew him well have often described to me in some detail his peculiarities of appearance and manner; his huge body, his shrewd, ancient face, his couch of lion-skins, his pot of beer, which he never relinquished except to have it refilled, and over the edge of which it was his embarrassing habit to stare long and fixedly at visitors before condescending to utter the “*Ti kuona*” (“I see you”), the recognised formula by which an Angoni chief signifies his readiness to enter into conversation. Most fortunately for the Livingstonia missionaries, this potentate, upon whose attitude towards them so much depended, gradually formed a strong attachment to their head pastor, Dr. Laws; and it was chiefly owing to this attachment that the missionaries at last received

authority to build schools and to pursue their work freely on the plateau, and that muavi poisoning and other practices of which they expressed disapproval were interdicted by the old chief. For himself, nevertheless, Mombera steadily refused to change his habits or to make any profession of the Christian religion. His people might do so if they chose, but in his own case no exhortations were of the slightest avail. Even his constant regard for Dr. Laws was powerless to move him here. Pagan he had lived, and pagan at last he died; nor in his attitude, characteristic of the man as it was, can one help remarking certain qualities not undeserving of sympathy and even of admiration. Upon this tribe his death produced disintegrating effects of a much more serious kind than those which had followed the close of Zongindaba's iron rule.

In order to understand the reason of this, it is only necessary to compare Mombera's Angoni as they were at the end of his reign with the Angoni of Zongindaba's time. The natures of the two men—of Zongindaba and Mombera—seem to have had much in common. They were both pure Angoni-Zulus, with the same hereditary ideas and tendencies, the same shrewdness, the same hard, unyielding temper. Indeed, if the mantle of Zongindaba can be said to have fallen on any of his successors, it was upon Mombera that it fell. But between their political situations there was this great difference, that, while the former ruled over a community of which the dominant caste boasted a descent as unblemished

as his own from one of the finest native races in Africa, while his warriors had been trained by constant fighting and elated by almost constant victory, and while, above all, they had escaped contact with Europeans, Mombera's subjects, or at any rate the rising generation of them, were deeply tainted by the admixture of inferior blood, had contracted under missionary influences many ideas of a revolutionary kind, and had moreover been exposed, during several years, to the humiliating consciousness of a power in the land, in the shape of a European Administration, against whose edicts it would be hopeless for them to rebel. Zongindaba's death, as I have said, was followed by the dismemberment of his tribe---that is to say, by the division of the whole into various smaller bodies. But it was not followed by any change in the system of government which he had practised. The smaller bodies referred to were ruled thenceforward by their own chosen chiefs in exactly the same despotic way as the original tribe had been ruled by Zongindaba himself, and as all Central African tribes, whether Angoni or not, were then ruled, although with varying degrees of ability and firmness. This state of things, however, could not long continue to exist after the advent of British settlers and a British Administration. Defeat in the field and consequent subjection to civilised authority brought it speedily to an end among most tribes. The Northern Angoni alone, escaping this fate in the manner already set forth, remained for some years the last example in the country of a

tribe autocratically governed by its own chief. But during those years various indirect influences, especially the influence of the missionaries, had been at work, as I have stated, among these Northern Angoni, and, in the end, brought about nearly the same result as force of arms had done in other cases.

Mombera's decease caused no such secession of clans, no such exodus into fresh territory as had followed the death of Zongindaba. But it entailed on his people political consequences of the gravest kind, consequences for which the way had long been paved, and which had only been awaiting his removal to make themselves apparent—loss of tribal unity, decentralisation of power—a general collapse, in short, of the system of government which, with slight modifications, had prevailed all over Central Africa for hundreds of years, which among the Angoni had found its fullest development, and of which, at least within the limits of the Protectorate, he was the last representative.

A *de jure* chief has succeeded him, a personage regarded, by virtue of a polite fiction, as endowed with all the privileges of his forbears, but having in fact little real authority beyond the neighbourhood of his own residence. Each outlying headman has assumed, within his particular sphere, powers and functions formerly vested in the paramount ruler. The people have begun to look to these petty headmen for decision in matters which would once have been referred to the supreme court of the tribal chief; and, if an appeal from

such a decision is contemplated, it is no longer to that court but to the missionaries that they turn for help and advice—not, I venture to think, because they are missionaries, but because they are white men.

Such being the state of affairs induced among these people by a limited and purely unofficial contact with Europeans, it will be easy to understand how much more completely those races have been affected whom we, having found it necessary in the first place to subdue them by arms, have since governed in the peculiarly direct and intimate fashion which distinguishes Protectorate administrations. The contrast is indeed striking. Politically disorganised as they are, the Northern Angoni do at any rate possess independent powers which, however decentralised and therefore weakened, are yet in their way real enough; and the proud consciousness of this has enabled them to preserve something at least of the spirit and outward attributes of their once dominant race. The Zulu speech still lingers among them, clicks and all.¹ Their indunas still wear the rubber ring and waxen crown.² Their war dress is that of the Zulus, with feather head-gear, kilt of cats'-tails, ox-hide shield, and assegais. They bear themselves too, especially the old men, with great dignity, and profess to hold all neighbouring natives, as indeed they really do hold them, in

¹ The Chinyanja and Chitonga languages are nevertheless generally understood and often used.

² A somewhat absurd-looking article shaped like a low chimney-pot hat without a brim.



AN ANCONÍ WARRIOR IN FIGHTING DRESS

From a sketch by the Author

absolute contempt. But elsewhere not even a vestige of political unity remains among the so-called tribes, nor any sort of real authority with their so-called chiefs. Indeed, in nine cases out of ten, throughout British Central Africa to-day, the word "chief" means rather what the Portuguese call a "capitao"—a sort of overseer under Government surveillance; while the word "tribe" has ceased to have any political signification at all, but is merely used in an ethnological sense to distinguish from each other the various branches of the Bantu race inhabiting the country. I doubt very much, however, whether either chiefs or people would really care to revert to the old *régime* even if such a thing were possible. The former have grown accustomed to the loss of power, balanced as it is by the advantages of diminished responsibility and of efficient protection from tribal enemies, while the latter are keenly appreciative of the more even-handed justice of European courts, and also, no doubt, of immunity from the ingenious complications of torture and death formerly employed to punish trivial offences. But the whole question of the tribe, considered as a political organism, of its relation to more advanced systems of government, and of the effects always produced upon it by European intervention, is such that I must postpone its fuller discussion to a subsequent chapter.

Beyond the district of West Nyasa lies that of the North Nyasa, the *ultima Thule* of the Protectorate. There are three Government stations there, the head-quarters being at Karonga (already

mentioned in connection with the North End War), with an outpost at Deep Bay, some distance to the south, and another at Fort Hill, on the Tanganyika plateau. Deep Bay is a pretty spot and one of the best hunting centres in the country, game being not only very abundant there, but also, as it would seem, of a peculiarly confiding disposition. A friend of mine, who spent a few months in the place, told me that he used constantly to shoot bushbuck and duiker in his vegetable garden, and that he once bagged a couple of eland within ten minutes' walk of the front-door. As a matter of fact, bushbuck have a well-known fondness for wandering round about houses and native villages where there is sufficient cover to shelter them; but eland, on the contrary, are among the most wary of African antelopes, and rarely show themselves anywhere near the habitations of men.

Why Deep Bay was ever so called is a little difficult to understand, the lake there being of no great depth—very much shallower, at any rate, than in the neighbourhood of Nkata. I have never travelled further northward than Deep Bay, so I am unable to give any description of what the country is like in that direction, and a similar reason leaves me with nothing to say about what Hans Breitmann would call the “inside barts” of the other lake districts.

In November 1899 I quitted Nkata in order to retire to the Shiré Highlands. I had now spent more than three consecutive years in the tropics, and my home leave was overdue. As a

matter of fact, it had been my intention not to take advantage of this leave for a few months longer; but a severe attack of fever, which I contracted while shooting in the Shiré Valley on my way up to Zomba, and which clung to me for several weeks with depressing effect, led me to think that perhaps after all it was time for me to get out of Africa for a while. I accordingly applied for and obtained six months' leave of absence, and a little later, in January 1900, I sailed from Chinde for Southampton.

And here let me utter a word of warning to those who contemplate a lengthened sojourn in uncivilised lands. Let all such take care either to bring out a supply of clothes, etc., sufficient to see them decently home again, or else (and this is perhaps the better plan) replenish their wardrobes in good time before starting on the return journey. Above all, get a few warm things, bearing in mind that attire which is perfectly appropriate to tropical Africa¹—drill and khaki for instance—is a very poor covering in which to face the fogs and winds of the English Channel. It may seem strange that such matters should be overlooked, but they often are overlooked nevertheless. Then, again, on the score of respectability, I fear many of us are sadly below the mark when we book our homeward passages. Man is naturally careless of tape and buttons when left to himself, and time

¹ Of course there are many places even in British Central Africa—the whole of the Shiré Highlands, for example, and the districts of Central and Northern Angoniland—where the climate for three or four months in every year is too cold to admit of tropical clothing being worn with comfort or safety.

plays woeful havoc with his raiment. For myself, I know that three years and some odd months spent without thought for the morrow, in places where tailors and bootmakers are not, had reduced my exterior to a condition bordering, when critically regarded, on the disreputable. Some small improvement, it is true, one can always effect by purchasing at Cape Town a stock of such harmless, necessary items as neckties, collars, and, if one is not very fastidious, even shirts and boots; but the line will be drawn by most, I fancy, at the ready-made tweeds of Adderley Street. At any rate, I drew it there, and consequently had to go on my way, and presently to figure on Southampton Quay and Waterloo platform in the much-worn and only garments that I already possessed. I remember greatly envying a companion who had also spent some time in Central Africa, and who, although not really much better equipped than myself, enjoyed one signal advantage over me, in that he wore a large and well-preserved ulster, which was to his sartorial defects as charity is to sin. To aggravate matters, we had some eccentricities in the way of luggage which gave rise to a good deal of speculation—a hippopotamus head thinly disguised in a single tight wrapping of canvas, beneath which its outline showed with weird effect; a number of antelope-horns similarly done up in one vast parcel forming a highly irregular polygon; a couple of crocodile-skins, not done up at all, but tied together with strips of bark (as were most of my trunks also, in default of long-lost straps); a tusk of ivory, a bundle of

spears, and other outlandish articles. The saving presence, however, among so much unconventional baggage, was furnished by a certain oblong box, containing important documents for the Foreign Office which had been entrusted to my friend, and which bore in large black letters stencilled upon the lid the name and address of the then Prime Minister. We called this box "the *aegis*," and I am sure the legend displayed thereon did much to allay the natural suspicion which our other belongings must have excited in the breasts of railway-guards and hotel-keepers.

It was late in February when we reached England, on a bright, bitter morning—just such a day as one dreams of sometimes in the tropics—with grey skies and a few flakes of snow beaten hither and thither before a tearing wind. No doubt it would be superfluous to descant at length upon the feelings with which a man who has been long separated from civilisation enters once more into the life of cities, or reviews the familiar fields and hedgerows of an English countryside; but, at any rate, it is one of the few sensations of which the charm has not, in my opinion, been exaggerated. Even the mere comforts and conveniences which other people take as a matter of course have a piquancy of their own for the returning exile. To be able to get everything done by pressing buttons and pulling wires, to be whirled about in rubber-tired hansoms and express trains, to frequent theatres and clubs, to eat other things than fowl and goat, to have ice in one's wine and

electric light in one's bedroom—all these count for something, at least during the first week or two. But I think it is the country that impresses one most: the change from thousands of square miles of unreclaimed bush and swamp and forest to a land that bears upon its face the stamp of generations and centuries of culture, every bit of which has been divided and subdivided and pruned and tilled and levelled with such assiduity that it looks like a series of gardens; and then the smallness of scale, the chessboard exactitude of everything, the low, straight hedges, the square meadows and cornfields, the flat lawns, the little fenced game coverts—a toy world it all seems.

However, it is not of England, but of Africa, that I have to write. I left home again, after two months' extension of leave, in August 1900, and on returning to the Protectorate was appointed to take charge of the district of Zomba.

CHAPTER VI

FLORA AND FAUNA

IF it be spring-time in Nyasaland, the display of flowers will attract the attention of the most indifferent, blooms of every shape and hue being then abundant, from the great clusters of petals adorning certain papilionaceous trees down to the less conspicuous but equally beautiful ground-flowers and creepers. Except, indeed, in the matter of tree-orchids, which are not very well represented, the flowers of Nyasaland are scarcely surpassed either in respect of variety or brilliancy by those of any other part of the world. It is true that, except here and there in the hills, they do not often grow so close together as to present unbroken masses of colour; and therefore the estimate which any particular person may form of them as a whole depends, to some extent, on his powers of observation. Still, short of always travelling in a machilla and always falling asleep in it, there is no possibility of overlooking them entirely. Ground-orchids flourish almost everywhere. Among lilies we have the *Crinum*, with its long, heavy, pure white blossoms; and a most effective little tiger-lily of bright gold and deep

cardinal red ; also a tree-lily (*Vellozia*), so wonderfully beautiful that, as Sir Harry Johnston says, "even the botanists of Kew were touched, and called it *splendens*." Then mauve irises spring up in countless thousands during the rains, and pink and crimson gladioli, and pale yellow marguerites, hibiscuses too, anemones, gentians, flowering beans—hundreds of plants too, whose names are unknown to me, and many others perhaps which have escaped classification at the hands of the very few scientific botanists who have exploited the flora of the country. It must be added, however, that there are several forms of vegetation of which the traveller will heartily wish his path were rid. The common jungle grass is rather a nuisance, for it frequently reaches a height of ten or twelve feet, and, bending in heavy masses across the narrow native footways, makes them in places almost impracticable. Also the seeds of this and other kinds of grass are very easily detached, and, penetrating eyes, mouth and nostrils, give rise to the most violent hay-fever. Other seeds are furnished with spikes, claws, barbs, and all manner of horrid implements by which to work their way through the clothes of the unfortunate passer-by. Then there are various thorny bushes, notably a common acacia, locally known in Zomba as the Mlungusi thorn.¹ This is a pretty enough plant in itself, with its tender green leaves and sprays of pale sulphur-yellow blossom, and when properly trimmed makes a capital hedge ; but in its wild state it is nothing

¹ From the Mlungusi River on which Zomba stands.

more or less than a man-trap, being in fact closely related to the notorious South African "Wachteen-beetje," or "Wait-a-bit."

Another noxious obstacle is the tall, creamy-plumed *Phragmites* reed, with its plentiful sharp, stiff leaves, which cut the skin like a knife-point. Nasty, low creeping plants again are common, and frequently enmesh the feet of the unwary ; but when all is said, there is no vicious growth in Africa or in the world, I dare confidently say, to compare with the detestable thing popularly called "Cow-Itch," and known to botanists as the *Mucuna* Bean. This is a plant having small seed-pods covered with a close array of fine silky hairs, which, when shaken loose, fasten in myriads upon the unconscious wayfarer, and, reaching all parts of his skin, set up an irritation which words are literally powerless to describe. A man attacked by this abominable pest gives way for the nonce to absolute frenzy. His first impulse is to get rid of his clothes, which he does in the speediest possible way by simply tearing them from his person ; his next to roll in mud, dust, water, anything that happens to be near him. If a precipice were at hand, he might almost be forgiven for jumping over it, so wholly unendurable is that burning, pricking, clinging itch. Like many others, I used to laugh at the stories told concerning this formidable plant, regarding them as more or less of the *ben trovato* order, until one day I chanced to stumble on a *Mucuna* myself, ever since which my appreciation of the thing as a great practical joke upon

humanity has been tempered by the strongest determination never to fall into its hateful clutches again.

Animal life is very abundantly represented. The game beasts I shall discuss in a subsequent chapter, merely remarking here that, besides zebras, bush-pigs, wart hogs, and dangerous animals such as elephants, buffaloes, rhinoceroses and the larger *felidae*, Nyasaland is the habitat of fifteen or sixteen species of antelope, many of which are still extremely common.

Among other mammals, we have a wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*), a jackal (*Canis lateralis*), a hyæna (*H. crocuta*), the long-legged, lynx-like serval, the civet, and the genet; an ant-eater (*Manis Temminckii*), several kinds of mongoose, and, probably, two otters. Sir Harry Johnston's list mentions the Spotted-necked Otter (*Lutra maculicollis*), but puts the Cape Otter (*L. capensis*) in brackets, with a note of interrogation, as though doubtful whether it exists in Nyasaland or not. With regard to this, I am unable to give a positive opinion, but I have certainly had in my possession the skins of two otters exhibiting differences, in respect of size and markings, more considerable than is usually found in opposite sexes of the same variety, one being that of a small animal with dull brown fur, the other nearly half as large again, also brown in colour, but showing a broad patch of silvery grey on the throat and upper part of the chest. I have heard of the Striped Hyæna (*H. striata*) in Nyasaland, but not on very good authority, and I much doubt whether

it is really to be met with in any part of that country, where, however, its near relation, the Spotted Hyæna, is extremely common. Cowardly as it is, the hyæna is a good deal feared by the natives, owing to its unpleasant habit of sneaking up to them while they lie asleep, and biting their faces. I was assured in Northern Angoniland that the hyænas there would often lie in wait outside the huts at dawn, and make a sudden rush at the inmates directly they put their heads out of doors. Strange as this may sound, it is yet quite intelligible to anybody who knows the cunning disposition of the hyæna and has seen a native hut, the entrance to which is generally so low that a man would be obliged to bend almost on his hands and knees to pass through it, in which position he would naturally be, for the moment, singularly defenceless.

The Central African (Temminck's) ant-eater is a curious and interesting creature, with a small, elongated head, and very strong feet and digging claws, while its body is entirely covered with large, shell-like scales, of a slaty blue-brown colour, which it can erect or depress at will. The force with which these scales can close upon an object will be best understood by those who have tried to lay hold of an ant-eater at an inopportune moment.

The wild dog is common enough. He is an ugly-looking beast, with a pied body, coarse hair, short head and large, upright ears. These wild dogs play fearful havoc with game, occasionally clearing out whole districts precisely in the same

manner as the red dhole of India, before whom even the tiger is said to retreat. They have a wonderful power of scent, wonderful boldness, endurance and pertinacity, and their loose, easy gallop covers the ground far more quickly than it appears to do. They usually hunt in considerable packs, although I have sometimes met them in threes and fours. I have never heard of wild dogs actually attacking man, but they often behave as if on the point of doing so, and unarmed travellers have been literally treed by them before now.

Apes and baboons are not very well represented, the only species generally met with being the yellow dogfaced baboon and the common grivet. The former is held in great detestation by the natives, whose maize gardens he plunders whenever he can. A cunning, savage and most powerful brute is he, more than a match for nine dogs out of ten. Indeed, I well remember how a favourite dog of my own, and not a small one either, for he was a crossbred boarhound, met his death one day at the hands of an "old man" baboon, which, on being attacked, turned sharply on the hound, seized him with hands and teeth, and tore him nearly in half across the middle of the body. The extraordinary story current all over Nyasaland, and I believe elsewhere in Africa, that baboons frequently attempt to ravish native women is difficult to believe, although the natives themselves strenuously, and without exception, affirm it to be true.¹

¹ Since this was written, I have ascertained that the behaviour

There is a black and white monkey, the skin of which I have received from Chikala, where it was said to have been killed. The hair on the shoulders is white, and falls in long fringes like a cape, but elsewhere is shorter and of a deep, black colour. This may be the Black Mangabey (*Cercocebus aterrimus*).

A small lemur (*galago*) is also found, living specimens being occasionally brought in by the natives for sale. This lemur is a charming little thing to look at, with its soft bluish-grey fur and large, solemn, perfectly circular eyes. It also makes a most engaging pet. I knew one which used to live half wild in the roof of a verandah at Zomba, coming and going without let or hindrance. In disposition, he was on the whole very sociable, but inclined at the same time to be somewhat overburdened with a sense of his own dignity. At any rate, it was very easy to offend him ; and, when this happened, he would retire to his coign of vantage in the roof, which nothing would then induce him to quit. At other times he would come out readily when called by his native name of "Changa." Five-o'clock tea was his favourite meal, and he rarely missed it, being accustomed about that time to refresh himself with a saucer of milk, which he drank with elaborate daintiness. His curiosity was infinite, and sometimes overcame his natural good breeding ; but lapses of this kind often brought their own punishment, as once,

of these animals in captivity, according to reliable observers, strongly supports the assertion of the natives regarding them.

when he thrust his head unbidden into a small coffee-cup and could not withdraw it. The sight of him thus unexpectedly bonneted I remember to this day. Though a certain sedateness marked his normal bearing, he possessed a truly wonderful reserve fund of activity, and could climb anything and jump anywhere when the humour took him. Moreover, he had a knack of alighting after the most prodigious leap almost as gently as a bird. I have known him to drop suddenly from a high curtain-pole on to the edge of a tea-tray without upsetting a single cup; but then, of course, he was a very small animal—smaller, in fact, than he looked, owing to his thick fluffy coat.

Bird life is exceedingly well represented. Of game birds we have quail and francolin, a bustard (*Otis melanogaster*), and, if they can properly be so classed, the common guineafowl (*Numida cornuta*), and several pigeons, including the pretty fruit pigeon (*Vinago Delalandii*), in colour pale water-green and bright golden bronze, with red legs and black wing-feathers edged with yellow. But the truest game birds are to be found among the wildfowl which frequent the neighbourhood of lakes and rivers in vast numbers, the order *Anseriformes* alone being represented by no fewer than twelve species. To give some idea of the abundance of aquatic birds, I will quote the following extract from my diary, describing one of many visits paid to Lake Chilwa—

"June 22, 1901.

"Have just returned from an ulendo to my old camping and shooting ground at Nchenga on

the Lake Shore. I went in the first instance to Chembera's, further north, but found the reeds there too thick for shooting, and accordingly left the morning after my arrival and made my way to Mkanda's at the mouth of the Naisi River. From this point I sent my servants and carriers on to Nchenga by the shore route, while I myself crossed over in a 'dug-out' canoe to Chisi Island, in order to make arrangements with the islanders for supplying limestone to Zomba. When I last visited the Lake (in November), there was no water at all between Chisi and the mainland; nothing but black mud, dried and cracked by the heat and littered with millions of univalvular shells. Now the stretch of ground—about five miles by a mile and a half—is covered with water, perhaps three feet deep.

"Chisi itself is a pretty place full of rocks and very well wooded, baobabs and euphorbias predominating. Singing birds of a kind are rather plentiful here, and the higher cliffs are haunted by clouds of white-necked crows (*Corvus scapularis*). The islanders are poor specimens, particularly the Anguru, many of whom have a nasty scaly appearance, due possibly to an excessive fish diet. Shortly before sunset I came to Malua's village, where I halted for a rest, being in fact rather exhausted by much climbing in the sun. What most impressed me here was a sort of hedge or rampart of bushes growing round Malua's own hut. The plant which formed this hedge was singularly beautiful, standing some

20 feet high and having a close and regular foliage, the large lustrous green leaves being arranged something after the manner of a rhododendron. A better screen for outside of a garden could not be imagined, and even isolated bushes would look very handsome. I therefore determined to take some cuttings away with me. Several branches had recently been lopped off and left upon the ground, where they had already begun to sprout, little fibrous root-bunches growing down into the soil from each joint of the fallen stem, from which I conclude that the plant should be easy to propagate.¹ The natives call it 'likuta,' and use its thick milky sap to poison fish. When I began my return trip to the mainland, it was nearly dark. Vast flocks of wildfowl rushed from time to time over the canoe, appearing suddenly out of nothing and vanishing as swiftly into the *Ewigkeit* that lies about these mysterious swamps.

"Ten minutes later the short tropical twilight ended. The flying birds, no longer visible, came and passed like a hurricane of wings and wild voices; the quick staccato note of the teal, the long, piercing cry of the spur-winged plover, the whistle of the tree-duck, the raucous scream of the umbres, the deep squawk—I had almost said bark—of geese and other great fowl; all

¹ Nearly all the cuttings which I took back to Zomba rooted well, but, contrary to my expectations, grew very slowly. The plant is a kind of *euphorbia*, and is, I am told, frequently met with in the district of Angoniland. I have noticed it in Zomba District at one or two villages on the mainland, as well as on Chisi Island.



THE CHILWA VARANES—WILDFOWL MOVING AT THE APPROACH OF NIGHT
From a sketch by the Author

manner of shrill and sweet and harsh and plaintive sounds crossing and mingling in indescribable confusion. There was no moon. My own camp-fire was the only thing visible, a tiny core of light growing bigger, however, with every stroke of the paddles, until within the circle of its radiance I could see the figures of my men and the outline of a pitched tent. Soon afterwards, the canoe slid softly aground ; and, jumping into the water, I waded ashore.

"Next morning I was up betimes, and shot thirteen teal and two black duck before breakfast within a hundred yards of my tent. A very pretty bird is this little African teal, with blue bill, pale buff-coloured head, topped by a dark chocolate streak, mottled brown body, and blue and green wing-covers. Small shore birds were present in great numbers—knots, greenshanks, sandpipers, painted snipe, and so forth. Scarcely anything in bird nature is more delicately beautiful than the outspread wing of a painted snipe, with its pattern of golden-bronze discs on a ground of tender grey. The yellow-billed terns are very graceful too, and so are the black and white ruby-eyed plovers, which followed me everywhere, filling the air with incessant clamour. Much in evidence, of course, were the ubiquitous white and tawny squacco herons. Of larger herons I noticed one almost exactly like our own ash-grey English bird (*Ardea cinerea*), and another still bigger, which may have been the Goliath Heron (*Ardea Goliath*). The lovely crowned crane (*Balearica chrysopelargus*) is rather common at

Chilwa, and on this occasion I watched a pair of them for some time through field-glasses. They were moving gingerly about in the odd fashion so characteristic of many cranes and storks, hopping up and flapping their great wings from time to time or striking with inconceivable swiftness at some stray insect or reptile.

" At about seven o'clock I started in a canoe to explore the reed-beds, which stretch more or less continuously between Nchenga and Chisi. Here were ducks in countless thousands, including teal, black ducks, red ducks, white-faced tree-ducks and the pink-billed, grey *Poecilonetta*. The black ducks I found unaccountably wild, and the teal not quite so plentiful as on the shore. The red ducks were both the most numerous and the least difficult to approach, besides which they rarely dive after being wounded, as the others almost invariably do, especially the teal. I lost a great many birds in this way, and even of the red ducks many escaped by fluttering into the reeds, which were in many places so thick that the paddlers had to get out into the water (about waist deep) and push the canoe forward with their hands. Regarding these red ducks (as I call them), I do not know what their proper name may be. Johnston's list mentions *Nyroca brunnea*, 'the Brownish Pochard'; and this I took at first to be the bird in question, until, on turning to the descriptive text, I saw *Nyroca* represented as 'a pretty little black duck with yellow eyes.' It seems permissible to wonder why the same bird should be variously termed brownish in the scientific list

and black elsewhere ; but whether black or brown, it can hardly be the duck I mean ; for the latter, besides being of an undeniable chestnut colour all over, is rather large than little, and has blue eyes instead of yellow ones.

“ In addition to the ducks, great numbers of coots or rails (*Porphyrio smaragdonotus*) inhabit the reeds. Handsome birds are they, having plumage of a deep shining indigo hue, with a flat coral-red shield between the eyes—a sort of prolongation upward of the beak—and pink legs with very long flexible toes. Their flesh is tender to eat, and somewhat resembles that of a chicken. They are, however, an abominable nuisance to the wildfowler, as they lie very close, singly or in pairs, and fly off under his nose with a sudden, loud scurry of wings, which makes his heart jump into his mouth and his gun to his shoulder, besides disturbing every duck within a couple of hundred yards.

“ Another annoying fowl is the common snake-bird (a species of cormorant), so called, I suppose, from its appearance when swimming, which is decidedly serpentine, the creature's body being then so far submerged that only its lean, sinuous neck and the outline of its back remain visible. When in full flight, these worthless fowl so much resemble black duck as often to engage the shooter's attention until they come nearly within range of his gun, when their longer beaks betray them. One constantly sees snake-birds and other cormorants sitting bolt upright on rocks or tree-stumps, with stiffly

extended wings in the attitude known to heraldry as 'displayed.' This may be with a view to ensuring greater rapidity in plunging after fish, or, as I have sometimes thought, simply in order to dry the feathers after a dive; for the birds, when thus posed, throw their heads back, and certainly do not give one the impression of being on the watch for prey.

"In one of the open stretches of water which are met with here and there among the reeds, I came upon a large flock of pelicans. I was anxious to shoot one of these enormous birds as a specimen, and had brought a rook-rifle with me for that purpose. They were swimming away in what seemed a very leisurely fashion, but it soon became apparent that they moved in reality much faster than the canoe, which I therefore directed into the reeds with the intention of cutting them off. This was done quite successfully, and I then killed one of the pelicans by a somewhat lucky shot in the eye. The heat being now very great and my stock of cartridges nearly exhausted, I started back, reaching camp again at three o'clock in the afternoon, when my bag was turned out and counted, the numbers being as follows: 24 red duck, 15 teal, eight black duck, five tree-duck, five poecilonetta, one coot and one pelican—total, 59 head.

"I was much exasperated at this time (being frightfully thirsty) to find that there was no more fresh-water in the cask which I had brought with me, some of the men having probably stolen what remained of it during my absence. The lack of

fresh water is certainly a serious drawback to Nchenga as a camping-ground, although in other respects it is a pleasant spot, being surrounded by short grass instead of rank vegetation, in consequence of which the traveller who halts there enjoys a more open view and a greater immunity from mosquitoes than anywhere else on the Lake.

"The water of Chilwa, however, owing to the presence of lime and other deposits, is so brackish as to be quite undrinkable by itself and extremely unpleasant even when mixed with tea or whisky, while the nearest place from which good water can be obtained is Piou-Piou hill,¹ three or four miles away. I went out again at about five o'clock for some flight-shooting, and took up my position in a bed of rushes growing at the end of a narrow landspit, which here juts far into the water. The wildfowl, travelling from one part of the lake to another, necessarily cross this spit in immense numbers at great speed, and at every variety of height and angle. Among others came thousands of black ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*) flying loosely at a moderate distance from the ground. On catching sight of me, however, as, in spite of the reeds, they nearly always did, the whole flock, uttering loud cries of alarm, would wheel suddenly and rise straight into the air, keeping thenceforward at a great height until the farther shore was reached, when I could just see them,

'Stooping weary to the welcome land,'

¹ The name is probably derived from a native word, "Piou," meaning a duck.

as Bryant has described it. Besides black ibises, I saw some which were grey, strongly resembling curlews; also a few of those awkward, ugly, but much coveted¹ creatures, the Marabou Storks. Geese passed from time to time, but warily, keeping for the most part well out of gunshot. I killed only one—a handsome spur-winged goose (*Plectopterus Gambensis*), which, by the way, nearly fell on my head. Had he done so, I should have fared very badly indeed, for the spur-wing is a most ponderous fowl. In addition to this goose, I shot before dark 12 teal, one red duck and one tree-duck, making a grand total of 74 head for the day."

So much then for wildfowl and game birds. Of others the list is long, including many which must be reckoned among the most graceful and brilliant-feathered creatures in the world—sun-birds, whose iridescent colours melt into fresh combinations at every turn of the head, at every flutter of the wing; golden weaver finches, and diminutive black widow-birds; honeyguides; starlings with plumage even and bright as jewelled armour; parrots (not very well represented, however);² hoopoes; rollers; orioles; plaitain-eaters (including the splendid green and crimson Turaco, who carries a small arched crest of the hue of the chrysoprass, finished at the upper edges with pure white); bee-eaters, gorgeous in scarlet and blue. The latter may be

¹ On account of their valuable tail-feathers. This Stork is perhaps better known as the "Adjutant Bird" (*Leptoptilus argala*).

² The continent of Africa is poorer in parrots than any other of the great tropical divisions of the globe.

seen in great numbers near Chiromo on the Lower Shiré, where they are protected by law and allowed to nest undisturbed in the banks of the river. To watch them flying in and out of their little tunnels, to hear their sweet, monotonous call as they dart and flutter across the water-levels on a still evening is a real joy to any one who cares for such things.

Of sun-birds, one of the commonest has a plumage of gold, bottle-green and jet-black. Another is of a deep chocolate colour, with scarlet throat, metallic-green crest, and a patch of bright violet at the shoulder of each wing. The little widow-bird (*Vidua paradisea*—the widow-bird of Paradise) is very common both on the hills and the plains, and is well worth notice—a diminutive ball of black fluff, with a triangular scarlet patch on the breast,¹ and a preposterous tail composed of eight or ten jetty plumes many times longer than the wee body to which they are attached. The flight of these tiny

¹ Sir H. Johnston describes the plumage of *Vidua paradisea* as black, cream, yellow, and chestnut. I have examined only one specimen (a male), which was black all over, except for the mark on the breast, and this was not chestnut, but bright vermillion. Perhaps these colours are peculiar to the breeding season, as the tail-feathers certainly are. Another Central African bird, the curious *Cosmetornis vexillarius* (a goatsucker), develops, at pairing time, a ribbon-like plume on each wing nearly three times the length of its whole body. These plumes, like those of *Vidua paradisea*, are purely sexual ornaments, and are moulted later on. One of the surest signs of sexual purpose in any growth is its evident uselessness for other purposes. The elongated plumes of the two birds just mentioned illustrate this point exceedingly well; for they must be not only unserviceable to their owners in general life, but a positive check upon activity and powers of flight.

birds, when anything like a stiff breeze happens to be blowing, is very erratic and funny, as, buoyed on their waving tails, they flutter hither and thither before the wind. The hornbills, again, are interesting. One wonders how it is that they keep their unwieldy beaks from injury; for these appendages, despite their look of solidity, are in fact so brittle that it is an easy matter to crush them between finger and thumb. The crow tribe is represented by the white-necked raven (*Corvultur albicollis*) and the white-necked crow (*Corvus scapulatus*), both exceedingly common. The two birds closely resemble each other in shape and colouring, but the raven has a much larger beak, and the white marking is confined to the back of its neck, and does not form a complete circle as in the case of the crow.

The order *Accipitriiformes* is represented by various hawks, kites and falcons, and by several true eagles, including the very noisy Fish Eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*), the handsome brown Fighting Eagle (*Spizaetus bellicosus*), and the Bateleur Eagle (*Helotarsus ecaudatus*), a large and powerful bird, made somewhat ridiculous, however, by the lack of a tail.

The pairing season of birds in Central Africa occurs about September and October, most of the young being hatched by December. Many of the nests, especially of the smaller birds, are most beautifully and ingeniously constructed, notably those of the weaver finches, which may be seen hanging in scores from tall palms, from the ends of reeds and branches overhanging water, and

in other inaccessible situations. The common golden weaver finch builds a large nest of strong grass or straw very closely and firmly intertwined, and finished off with especial neatness at the entrance-hole, which is placed underneath the nest. This hole or tunnel runs up for two or three inches in a straight line, and then dips suddenly to form a receptacle for the eggs.

Apropos of nidification, a curious example of the pertinacity with which some birds will continue this work in the face of difficulty and danger was afforded by the behaviour of two small wag-tails, which built their nest in the bows of a steel sailing-boat at Nkata Bay. This boat, when not in use, was anchored at about a hundred yards from the shore, but she was taken out nearly every day for a few hours' fishing. As soon as I saw the nest, I gave orders to the boatmen that it was not to be disturbed, but shortly afterwards during a cruise in rough weather it was torn away by a heavy rush of water and swept clean out of the boat. Rather to my surprise, a new nest was built almost immediately afterwards in the same place, but had scarcely been completed when it was unfortunately destroyed by a dog. Nothing daunted, the two little birds now set to work for the third time, building for a change right under the stern. They finished this nest successfully, and had laid two eggs in it, when a boatman, unshipping the rudder one day, put his clumsy foot upon the small edifice and crushed it flat—a disaster which the poor birds evidently regarded as final, for they made no attempt to repair it.

As an appendix to all this talk about flowers, animals, and birds, I must add a few words of explanation in order to avoid creating the false impression to which so many books of travel, without in any way exaggerating or departing from facts, unconsciously give rise. Often in Nyasaland as elsewhere, will new-comers remark that the accounts of the country which they have read in books are overcoloured and misleading, that certain features are represented as being what they are not, and especially that the beautiful flowers which they are expecting are nowhere to be seen. The truth is that, in treating of such things as the flora and fauna of any particular country, a writer is apt, for the sake of convenience, to deal with the existing varieties, or at any rate with as many of them as he may select for discussion, as much as possible together, and to devote several consecutive pages to a description of their most striking beauties and peculiarities.

In this way, such a list of names and epithets is strung together that the untravelled reader, generalising perhaps from a single chapter, pictures a land ablaze with blossom and alive with beasts and birds in every direction, forgetting that the various species, whose names produce such effect when crowded one after another into a few columns of print, are in reality scattered over a large area, in many parts of which they may be poorly represented or actually non-existent. Thus it is quite true that at certain seasons the show of flowers in Nyasaland is extremely varied and brilliant ; but it is not so everywhere in an equal

degree. The hills are somewhat gayer in this respect than the plains, and some parts of the plains are gayer than other parts. Indeed, considerable tracts are to be met with where flowers do not grow in marked profusion at any time, or where they are dwarfed and hidden by exceptionally thick grass; while during the dry, cool months of the year, it is of course possible to travel for great distances without noticing any particular display of bloom at all. In the same way, birds which abound in some neighbourhoods are almost entirely absent from others. I have spoken of the immense swarms of aquatic fowl which congregate on all the lakes and rivers, and I have mentioned a few of the many other pretty and interesting birds which are generally to be found near native gardens or wherever else they can obtain the particular seeds or fruit on which they live. But in the dry depths of the woods there are thousands of square miles where, for some reason or other, Nature's animation seems to be suspended, and where the profound stillness of everything, the apparent total absence of life, motion and colour is peculiarly marked and impressive.

It is, in truth, difficult for anybody who has not known it to imagine quite this sinister desolation of the bush. In a settled and civilised country there are always little homely rural noises, to break upon the most secluded scene and remind us of the near neighbourhood of our fellow-men. But over great tracts of the Central African forests, during daytime at least, nothing stirs,

nothing calls except only the omnipresent cicada, whose persistent, dry, metallic note voices the very silence, as it were, and makes it seem more absolute. Later it is very different, for with the passing of the sun all the wild creatures of the bush are abroad, and the medley of sounds is, at times, almost indescribable. Then the questing cry of the great *felidae* is heard in the land ; that deep, ferocious sobbing breath that takes the heart of the woods with terror. The sharp, thin bark of the jackal follows it, and the longer howl of the hyæna rising in a melancholy crescendo. A hippopotamus bellows hoarsely from the river, and now and again the long jungle parts before the rush of a frightened antelope. The upper air, too, is full of mysterious voices, as the birds of night pass to and fro, flapping and hooting ; while under all there runs unceasingly the moan of millions upon millions of tiny wings, the restless, monotonous chorus of the insect world, purring, whirring, chirping, clicking, drumming above, below, on all sides, among the grass and trees, in the air, on the water, under the stones, in every nook and corner.

CHAPTER VII

INSECTS AND REPTILES

SOMETHING I must say on the subject of insects, if only to sound a note of warning. Of all the annoyances which beset the tempers of men in Central Africa, as distinct from actual dangers which threaten health and life,¹ this insect plague must be reckoned among the very worst. If we except the butterflies, which are undeniably charming objects, and the bees, which most of us have been taught to associate with industry and other sterling qualities, we may, I think, justly condemn the entire remainder of the insect creation as exemplified in Central Africa. Without taking into consideration such pests as termites, locusts, tsetse flies, and so forth, which injure man indirectly by their attacks on his houses, furniture, crops and live stock, there remains an almost uncountable multitude of insects which merit our dislike by reason of the actual pain and annoyance inflicted by them on our persons.

I very much doubt whether any part of the

¹ From the benefit of even this distinction we must, of course, exclude the *anopheles* mosquito.

world can show a greater variety of crawling, wriggling, biting and stinging abominations than those which make their appearance in Central Africa during the hot and rainy seasons. At such times of the year, even in a decent house on one of the higher plateaux, insects are a serious nuisance; but in a tent, on the plains, life after five or six o'clock becomes, through their noxious agency, a veritable affliction. To write is scarcely possible; to read not easy or pleasant. Go out into the bush, and you shall hear the hum of teeming insects running like an inner voice through the hot, black night. And it is still worse inside. The whole tent seems to be alive with pale, fluffy moths; hard, reckless-looking beetles; mantises, mason-wasps, mosquitoes, crickets, stick-insects, sandflies, houseflies, gadflies, and I know not what horrors, gyrating madly round the lamp, blundering against it with dull raps and falling singed, maimed and paralysed on to the table beneath.

Of mosquitoes there are at least two kinds, viz. the *anopheles* and another. Both bite human beings, but it is the former alone that we have to dread as the arch-propagator of malaria. In general appearance the two varieties are much alike, but the *anopheles* is distinguished by having speckled wings, and may also be known by the singular position which it adopts when settled on a wall or other perpendicular surface, to which its body then forms nearly a right angle, as if the insect were standing on its head.

The notorious tsetse fly (*Glossina morsitans*),

which may fairly be classed with the mosquito as having contributed more than anything else to hinder the colonisation of Africa by white races, is met with in certain "belts," as, for instance, between Zomba and Fort Lister, and in the neighbourhood of Lake Chilwa; but, since cattle are comparatively few in the Shiré Highlands and not much driven about, while horses are almost unrepresented, the tsetse is hardly felt to be such a curse as it is south of the Zambesi; in fact, one rarely hears it mentioned. I do not think this fly is found anywhere in the cattle-rearing districts of Nkondeland and Angoniland. It dislikes high altitudes, and is said to be practically absent from elevations of over 3000 feet. But one of the most remarkable things about it is the seemingly unaccountable irregularity of its occurrence even at levels which suit its requirements. For example, there are no tsetse at Chikwawa in the West Shiré district, but directly opposite on the other side of the river they abound, as they do also a little lower down stream and a little higher up.

Stinking insects are common. It is curious how many of these give off odours which are really allied to the scents of flowers, and which become nauseating only by reason of their almost incredible pungency and strength. There is a little bug which, when inadvertently squeezed, exhales a smell truly awful, yet comparable to nothing else than the smell of violets intensified to sickening point. Then we have a drab-coloured beetle which, under similar treatment, emits an

overpowering odour of almonds (prussic acid).¹ But worst of all is the dreadful *Ponera* ant. I remember reading once in an American paper about a dead whale which was described as being "forty feet long, with a smell ten times that length;" and *mutatis mutandis* this is an excellent definition of the *Ponera*, which, notwithstanding its minute size, can create a very widespread and powerful odour. Nor, it must be admitted, does this insect suggest floral fragrance even by perversion, but rather drains or a dead dog. Moreover, the *Ponera* is far from being the only noxious ant in the country. There are many others, and all of them without exception are such unmitigated nuisances in different ways that it is really irritating, to anybody who has lived much in tropical Africa, to hear their good qualities paraded by the moralist. What matters their industry, their courage, method and tenacity of purpose, since these are exercised to the annoyance and detriment of mankind?

Have you found your last pot of jam or sugar, your last loaf of bread, seething with tiny, greedy red ants? Have you felt beneath your breeches, my friend, the nippers of the savage blue-black warrior ant? Have you ever been visited at dinner-time by a swarm of flying ants—flying only until they can reach your table, and then shedding their myriad wings into your wine and soup? Have you seen your boxes, your gun-case, your mats, tables, bookshelves, the very timbers

¹ Fragrant scents are of course perverted by other creatures besides insects: by the musk-rat, for instance.

of your house, all tunnelled, riddled, pulverised by the ravages of the blind termite? Then seek out your worst enemy among men, and bid him "go to the ant" indeed. It sounds better than another expression, and is really quite as vindictive. The termite or white ant is naturally more annoying to persons setting up regular houses of their own than to those who travel about and sleep in tents; and the only sure way to checkmate this hateful pest is to lay down cement everywhere; failing which, repeated applications of paraffin oil sometimes have effect.

The insect itself, being a fat, defenceless thing with many enemies, dares not run the risk of exposure, and therefore works constantly under shelter of earth, which it throws up from the ground in conical heaps, or plasters together to form a covered way like a hollow tube. The rapidity with which termites construct these ingenious defences is almost incredible. I have known a bedroom door to be firmly blocked up by accumulations of soil in a single night, and large pieces of furniture, such as cupboards or chests of drawers, to be scored all over with little brown tunnels in the same time. Termites, however, can always be got rid of sooner or later, and are rarely found in houses which have been long inhabited. The mere noise and vibration of human footsteps, the banging of doors and so forth, greatly disturb them; and if, in addition to this, they are systematically routed out and dosed with paraffin, they will eventually go away altogether.

Of spiders the most noteworthy are the trap-

door insects (*Territelariae*), which dig pits in the sand; the *Tubitelariae*, which spin deep funnel-shaped webs; and the powerful, ugly *Laterigradae*, which employ no webs at all, but run about house-walls in search of their prey, and hide under pictures or other projecting surfaces.

Of the great host of parasitic insects, I shall mention only the notorious Matakanya or jigger-worm, which burrows into the feet of the unsuspecting. Matakanya were, I believe, originally brought either from the West Indies or from Brazil into Portuguese West Africa, and made their way thence, across the breadth of the continent, to its central and eastern portions, where until recently they were quite unknown. At the time of entering into human flesh, the Matakanya is a diminutive, black creature, scarcely visible to the European eye. If not at once removed, the insect rapidly increases in size, owing to the development of the sac containing its eggs; and, should this sac be broken in the process of extraction, the result is very likely to be a malignant and painful sore which may lame its victim for weeks. There is, however, little or no excuse for allowing a Matakanya to reach this stage, the presence of the insect in the flesh being at once made known by a quite unmistakable irritation, somewhat resembling that produced by the homely chilblain. Unfortunately, personal cleanliness alone is not an efficient safeguard against Matakanya, which will seize with equal readiness on any foot within reach. The only special precautions which can be recommended are, never to leave any clothing

on the floor in places frequented by these insects ; to have all rugs and mats frequently beaten and cleaned ; and to submit the feet periodically to the inspection of a native servant, negroes being very sharp at detecting Matakenya, and very clever at removing them.

To the scientific entomologist Central Africa affords a rich field, and one which must contain many still unnoticed *data* bearing on the great wonders of evolution. Protective resemblances in particular are extremely common among African insects, and are often carried out with such marvellous accuracy as to baffle the closest scrutiny. There is an insect¹ so precisely like a blade of dry grass that nothing but actual locomotion could possibly betray its real nature. I have held one of these in my hand, and have been tempted to doubt whether it could really be a living organism, although I had seen it crawling over the earth a moment before. So exquisite was the mimicry in every tiny detail—in colour, in shape, in the jointed structure of the body, in the minute cleft down the back, even in the stiff, branchy arrangement of the legs and antennae. Then there are insects which imitate twigs, or leaves, or fronds of moss, or the excrement of birds, while others as carefully reproduce the characteristics of allied but uneatable species ; the mimicry in every case being designed, of course, for self-preservation.

Not less interesting than strictly protective contrivances are those warning signs, also pro-

¹ One of the *Phasmidae* or Spectres.

tective in their results, which are displayed by insects whose nauseous flavour, or spines, bristles and other excrescences render them unpalatable to insectivorous birds, lizards, etc. Among such insects we may note the sour-blooded butterflies of the common Central African family *Acraeidae*, which are not only gorgeously coloured, but fly very slowly as though to make a purposely conspicuous display of themselves. Caterpillars afford another striking example of this principle, those which have an unpleasant taste, or which are covered with prickly hairs, being usually of bright hues, while the eatable kinds are nearly always brown or green. Again, most bees and wasps, whose stings make it desirable for insectivorous creatures to avoid them, are coloured accordingly, though there are at least two apparent exceptions to this rule in Central Africa, viz. the small honey-bee and the *Belonogaster* wasp, both of which, despite the fact that they possess severe stings, are unobtrusively coloured.¹

Turning now to reptiles, we find these represented by the common crocodile (*Crocodilus niloticus*), and by various tortoises, lizards, frogs, and serpents. Crocodiles literally swarm in nearly all the considerable rivers and lakes. I think

¹ An almost endless list of creatures having more or less perfect protective colouring could be quoted, not only from among insects and reptiles, but among birds and mammals. In some cases the animal, when detached from its natural surroundings, appears to be marked in anything but a protective manner—the zebra, for instance, whose staring striped coat of black and white might be expected to render him a highly conspicuous object. Yet in the shade of trees and long grass these stripes melt into a neutral hue most difficult to distinguish.

they are absent from the brackish Lake Chilwa, at least I have never seen any there ; but Nyasa is full of them, and so are the Zambesi and Shiré rivers. They attain, moreover, to a huge size, and by reason of their boldness and voracity are a perpetual source of danger to the villagers dwelling near their haunts—a danger materially increased by the singular *insouciance* so characteristic of the Bantu races even in matters of life and death. Although perfectly aware of the peril to be apprehended from crocodiles, natives can hardly ever be induced even to build a palisade round the pools from which they obtain their water. Women, being the drawers of water, are of course the most frequent victims. I once counted no fewer than ten feminine ornaments, bracelets, anklets, etc., which had been taken from the stomach of a single crocodile. Besides foraging for food in the water, these reptiles will frequently rush a yard or two up the bank in order to seize persons standing near the edge. The bodies of their victims are not devoured at once, but are secreted in some hole or reed-bed to await decomposition. That crocodiles eat birds, I do not believe. I have, it is true, seen a crocodile snatch a duck which had been shot and had fallen into the water, but in this case the sudden splash probably led the crocodile to believe that it was something else than a bird. Waterfowl swimming or wading about are certainly never taken in this way; but, on the other hand, all kinds of animals, as well as human beings, are liable to be seized. Somebody—

Cotton Oswell, I think—mentions having seen the skeleton of a crocodile in the branches of a tree near a river, and conjectures that 'it must have been thrown there by an elephant who had come down to drink and whose trunk the reptile had caught—catching a Tartar in very truth. Although decidedly vermin and nothing else, crocodiles, owing to the general detestation in which they are held, are shot at almost as often as seen, and a large number must be killed in this way every year. They do not seem to be particularly tenacious of life, nor does it require a hardened or even an ordinary solid bullet to kill them; a split or hollow one is just as effective. I have heard it said—I do not know with how much truth—that some kind of water-lice or other parasitic creatures will fasten upon a wounded crocodile and eat their way into the reptile's body, so that death may eventually result from a very slight injury.

To actually bag crocodiles, however, is not at all easy, for when ashore they generally lie close to the edge of the water with their noses pointing towards it, and a single convulsive flap of their great tails is enough to carry them at any moment beyond reach. Once and only once have I seen a dead crocodile recovered from water. This happened at Nkata Bay on Lake Nyasa. The crocodile in question—a very large one—was lying on a partially-submerged rock when my shot struck him, as I afterwards found, rather far back in the jaw. Of course he vanished at once beneath the water; and I should not have given

him another thought but that, after the lapse of a few seconds, he reappeared on the surface, where he began to spin round and round in frantic convulsions. Seeing this, I ran down towards the edge of the lake; but before I got there, the crocodile sank again. Some native fishermen coming up at this time in their canoes began to paddle to and fro near the spot, and presently called out to me, saying that they could see the crocodile lying dead on the sandy bottom. I offered them a reward of calico if they could retrieve his body; and, having been provided with a rope, they dived several times very pluckily, and at last secured the reptile and pulled him ashore. The stomach of this creature contained part of an ivory bracelet; and while he was being hauled up the bank he ejected a quantity of pebbles, together with about a quart of yellowish slime. The heart continued to palpitate irregularly, but strongly, during the whole time that he was being skinned (about three hours). Natives attach a peculiar value to crocodiles' teeth on account of their supposed medicinal virtue (*mankwala*). Two heads which I took home with me in 1899 were quite spoilt by being denuded of all their larger teeth on the journey to Chinde. These teeth are slightly recurved, round and thick, but not, as far as I have noticed, particularly sharp. The jaws are very long and tremendously powerful.

Several pretty lizards are found in Central Africa, the most conspicuous being the brilliant blue and golden Agama. The common house

lizard has a sober but pleasant colouring of creamy-grey and olive-green arranged in longitudinal stripes. Very interesting, too, are the chameleons, with their prehensile tails, large ghostly eyes, and wonderful power of changing colour so as to assimilate with that of their surroundings. The movements of the chameleon are so peculiarly slow and stiff as to give the impression that the creature is suffering from partial paralysis of the limbs. Altogether, though quite harmless, it has an extremely uncanny appearance, and it is not surprising that the natives regard it with superstitious aversion. Its faculty of changing colour is, I fancy, unique; but nearly all African lizards are more or less protectively coloured, some of them in a very high degree, as, for instance, the arboreal Geckos, whose mottled bodies so closely match the bark on which they rest that it is next to impossible to distinguish them until they begin to move. Some Central African lizards attain to a large size. I shot one near Matope which measured more than four feet in length, and was possibly a *Varanus*, although I am not certain as to its identity. The tail was long and very finely tapered, the claws sharp and slender, the body rather bulky, the skin very loose, wrinkling under pressure like the peel of a Tangerine orange. The scheme of colouring, as in the house lizard, was grey and green,¹ but the pattern of the markings was quite different, being bolder, and transverse instead of longitudinal.

¹ Another instance of protective colouring, though not quite so perfect as that of the Geckos.

The bifurcation of the penis characteristic of the *Lacertilia* was very marked. I was sorry afterwards that I did not preserve this lizard, but the only fluid in which I could have pickled it was a bottle of whisky, the last in the camp, belonging to my then hunting companion. I did suggest that this bottle should be sacrificed in the interests of science, but my friend demurred, and the whisky was eventually disposed of in the usual manner.

Snakes are common enough all over Nyasaland, and include some highly venomous kinds, such as the dreaded puff adder (*Bitis arietans*), the black mamba or cobra, the Cape viper, and others. Yet, for some unexplained reason, human beings rarely fall victims to snakes in Central Africa. I have often wondered at this, since natives go about barefooted and barelegged through the grass and bush at all hours and seasons, and, one would imagine, could scarcely escape being bitten sooner or later. Possibly they have some cure of their own for snake-bites,¹ as they profess to have for most evils to which the flesh is heir. The puff adder I have often seen on the hills, but not in the plains, although I believe it is found there also. Of all serpents this adder is perhaps the most loathsome to look at, being, as its name implies, very broad and squat. It is, moreover, exceedingly venomous, and possesses the dangerous power of striking backwards over its own body. Some of the non-poisonous snakes, on the

¹ Their remedy for the venom of the Spitting Cobra (*Naja Flava*) is human milk.

other hand, are very pretty, notably the delicate green tree snakes. The pythons, again, are handsomely marked, and the flexible, scaly coils of their great bodies have a certain sinister beauty. They are of course constrictors, and kill their prey by crushing it.¹

Apropos of snakes, it is worth while to mention that, all over Nyasaland, as in many other parts of Africa, there is a firm belief in the existence of a crowing snake, with a comb on its head, a sort of parallel to our own cockatrice.² Sitting outside my tent on Chumalumbé's peak near Zomba one June evening between sunset and dark, I was struck by a curious, oft-repeated noise—long-drawn, subdued, yet metallic, like the sound of a wire in the wind. I thought at the time that it must be the note of some bird or large insect, which indeed was probably the case. My servants, however, on being interrogated, at once replied that it was the cry of a serpent with a head like a cock (*mosi mosi tambala*). Later on I obtained a more detailed account of this monster. I had been hunting on the right bank of the Shiré, from Matope to the Murchison Cataracts ;

¹ Pythons are excellent swimmers. I once saw a large python, or what looked like one, in Lake Nyasa, nearly a mile from the shore. It was travelling through the water at great speed, making for land ; but what surprised me was that at frequent intervals it disappeared entirely below the water for as much as fifteen or twenty seconds at a time. I was in a canoe, and it passed within a hundred yards of me, so that I was able to observe it closely.

² Livingstone mentions this in his *Travels and Researches in South Africa*. He says : "There is a serpent called by the inhabitants 'Noga-Putsane,' or serpent of a kid, which utters a cry by night exactly like the bleating of that animal."

and wishing to explore the other side of the river, I told my gun-bearer to get a canoe for the purpose of ferrying me across. To this he demurred, and on being pressed for a reason, declared that the low, wooded hills which there border the left bank of the Shiré were the haunt of a large and fierce serpent (*njoku wokulu ukali k'wambiri*). Further questioned, he said that the serpent was very dark in colour, lived in trees, and would pursue human beings at sight, darting through the forest from branch to branch faster than any man could run on the ground. At the moment of overtaking its prey, the serpent, he told me, would drop suddenly from above, delivering its blow on the crown of the head. He added that it would not immediately devour the body of its victims, but would go away and return later, as the crocodile does, when decomposition had softened the flesh. When I visited Northern Angoniland, I was told by Mr. Murray, of the Livingstonia Mission, that all the natives in that neighbourhood professed the greatest dread of this serpent. He also informed me that a man who complained of having been chased and struck by one had been brought into the Mission, and had died shortly afterwards in great agony. It is probable that this extraordinary reptile, shorn of the fictitious attributes with which native fancy has endowed it, is really some species of mamba or cobra—perhaps the tree cobra (*Dendroastis angusticeps*).

CHAPTER VIII

BIG GAME

Few people who have not lived in a country like Central Africa can imagine how largely the art of hunting¹ occupies the leisure thoughts and hours of the European exile, or how rapidly the old instinct of the chase, an instinct latent in nearly all of us, develops and expands in the congenial atmosphere of the bush. In Nyasaland hunting is not merely the recreation of a certain number, or one recreation among many. It is, over by far the greater part of the country, the only recreation available, and is therefore universally practised. Were it possible, men would doubtless practise it continually; but Nature has provided a close season for the wild game of Central Africa, which effectually protects them for a considerable portion of the year. During the later rains and the subsequent cold weather, that is to say (roughly speaking), from January or February until August, rank vegeta-

¹ The term "hunting" is used here and hereafter in the sense in which it is commonly understood in Africa: *i.e.* to signify the stalking and shooting of big game, as distinct from hunting with horses and hounds.

tion of all kinds flourishes in such abundance that hunting, except on the higher plateaux, is impossible. The bush fires, however, begin as a rule about July, and continue for two or three months, breaking out sporadically in one neighbourhood after another. The hunter watches these fires eagerly, for they herald the advent of another term of sport.

Towards the middle of August the flames will have cleared enough ground to allow of game being seen and stalked ; and from that time until November, when the rains begin, is perhaps the finest part of the shooting season. I have often been asked about the merits of Central Africa from the point of view of a big-game hunter, as compared with other parts of the world ; and I have no hesitation in saying that, so far as my own moderate experience entitles me to pronounce an opinion, I consider it to be a first-rate country. Of course the climatic conditions are trying. The heat of the sun after September becomes excessive. The light, owing to the prevalence of haze, is deceptive ; and the burnt grass is not only slippery and difficult to walk upon, but fills the air with minute floating ashes, which, being inhaled into the throat, produce violent irritation and thirst. Game, however, is more plentiful, and also on the whole easier to approach than in most parts of India, for example ; while, with the exception of certain districts in Somaliland and Uganda,¹ Nyasaland affords probably the finest sport obtainable in Africa to-day. I say advisedly

¹ I speak of these from hearsay only.

to-day, for with the South Africa of fifty or sixty years ago no modern country can compare. But those old grounds below the Zambesi, endeared to all of us by the stirring tales of the men who first broke into their solitudes, are now nearly as well known as Piccadilly, and about as rich in wild animals.

Even in comparatively new districts the game is retreating year by year into unknown fastnesses. The Cape, the Orange River Colony, and the Transvaal are practically shot out. On the once famous flats between the Orange and Molopo rivers, which less than half a century ago constituted a veritable hunter's paradise, the modern traveller may wander for days on end without catching a single glimpse of horn or hide. Many types, once numerous in South Africa, have absolutely disappeared—the white rhinoceros, for instance, and the true quagga. Others exist only in small numbers on private estates. And, with the wild creatures of those regions, the men who hunted them have passed away. Cornwallis Harris, Cotton Oswell, Gordon Cumming, are only names. Their very writings have acquired, in the short space of fifty years, something of the peculiar interest which attaches to the records of a perished epoch; for hap what hap may, it is scarcely likely that the rising generation will ever behold such sights as gladdened the eyes of those great hunters in the days when, as Sir Samuel Baker puts it, "the multitude of living creatures, at certain seasons and localities, surpassed the bounds of imagination. . . ."

In view of this rapid extinction of animal life in other parts of the continent, it is gratifying to think that, in British Central Africa at least, no indigenous species is in any immediate danger of being exterminated. The reasons of this are several. In the first place, as I have already said, there is a natural close season, extending over fully six months in every year, during which it is impossible to hunt. Again, the European population is small and scattered. There are no railways to facilitate access to the country, and no sensational industries, such as gold mining, to attract prospectors and adventurers of the type so common farther south. Moreover, there are practically no horses in British Central Africa; nor if there were, is the country sufficiently open to admit of the riding down of whole herds of game, as has been done most ruthlessly in the southern colonies. Finally, the interests of wild animals have been additionally safeguarded by stringent regulations affecting the importation and sale of arms and ammunition, and by the creation of two "reserves," one in the Elephant Marsh above Chiromo, and the other near Lake Shirwa (Chilwa) in the Shiré Highlands. For these excellent measures we are indebted chiefly to the circumstance that both Sir Harry Johnston and his successor, Mr. Alfred Sharpe, are keenly interested in the preservation of fauna; the former primarily as a naturalist, the latter as a sportsman. Mr. Sharpe's practical knowledge of African game beasts is indeed probably greater than that of any man now living, with the exception of Mr. Selous,

although, owing to his reluctance to publish any account of his adventures, his name is little known in connection with the subject outside Central Africa. Of elephants in particular he has had an almost unique experience, having devoted himself exclusively to the pursuit of these animals for several years after his first arrival in the country. They must then have been extremely numerous. Even now they are very frequently met with between Chikala and Mangochi, in many of the Lake Districts, particularly about Matiti in West Nyasa, and in parts of the Marimba district. They are often shot in Zomba district, sometimes within a few miles of the township itself, and they have been seen again lately in the marsh which bears their name.

Giraffes inhabit the Luangwa Valley in North-Eastern Rhodesia, but are not found, I think, within the Protectorate.

The rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), though scarcely common, is to be met occasionally. I have seen his tracks several times in Zomba district; but, so far as I know, only four have been killed there by Europeans since 1898. One of these, which was bagged by Captain C. E. Luard, of the 1st battalion King's African Rifles, fell to a single Mark IV. bullet in the body—a marvellously lucky shot, considering the great bulk and strength of the rhinoceros.

Hippos swarm in all the considerable rivers and lakes. On the Zambesi and Lower Shiré, where they are subjected to continual persecution, they have grown rather shy and are not



photo

BRIDGE OVER THE LANGULA RIVER

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seen quite so frequently as they used to be; but on some reaches of the Upper Shiré, notably between Pampindu and Kalambizi in the neighbourhood of the Murchison Cataracts, in Lake Nyasa, and in the Bua and other rivers to the west of that lake, they are still very numerous, and may be killed without the least difficulty. Shooting hippos is, however, rather poor fun in any case, and in particular the common practice of firing indiscriminately at them from passing steamers is one which deserves severe condemnation.

The dead bodies of hippos, as everybody is aware, remain under water for some hours¹ before finally rising to the surface; and unless the hunter can afford to wait to recover them, he will do well to let the poor beasts alone. Hippos are purely herbivorous; and after darkness has fallen, they will often leave the water and wander for short distances inland, where they sometimes do great damage to native crops. Otherwise they are harmless enough, except for a playful habit of upsetting canoes. I was, however, charged on one occasion by a small hippopotamus on the banks of the Likangala River near Lake Chilwa. I had cut off his retreat from the water, and it was doubtless this that made him so desperate. It would have been easy to kill him; but as he was only about three parts grown and had poor teeth, I dodged aside, when he ran straight on to the river without attempting to follow me. The ivory of the hippo is of

¹ The length of time varies, according to circumstances, from one or two to six hours.

excellent quality, and nothing but its inferior size prevents it from equalling that of the elephant in value. The hide is capable of taking a very fine polish, although it is surpassed in this respect by the hide of the rhinoceros, which, under proper treatment, assumes all the appearance of delicately clouded amber.¹ Central African natives are extremely fond of hippo. flesh, and to watch them cutting up and devouring one of these monstrous animals is a memorable, if somewhat disgusting, sight. The news that a "Mvu" has been killed spreads like wildfire among the neighbouring villages. Crowds assemble rapidly. Fires are lit about the spot. The air grows pungent with wood smoke and the reek of blubber. Night falls, and in the glow of blazing logs the dark figures of the feasters show in demoniac silhouette, brandishing knives, laughing, gesticulating, squabbling, gobbling, until, within what seems an incredibly short time, the whole huge carcase, weighing perhaps two tons or more, has been entirely demolished. Apropos of hippos, let me quote the following odd story, which was told to me by Major F. B. Pearce. A large hippo made its appearance one day in a certain village near Lake Chilwa. It was at once attacked by the inhabitants, severely wounded, and at last driven off; but, with singular obstinacy, it persisted in returning again and again to the same place, where it was eventually killed. On examination of its skull, one of the large teeth was found to

¹ As may be seen in the beautiful circular shields manufactured by certain Abyssinian tribes.



A NYASALAND LION.
From a sketch by the Author.

be badly decayed and malformed, and it would seem as though the pain resulting from this drove the poor beast to an act as nearly like deliberate suicide as any that can be related of the lower animals.

The buffalo (*Bos caffer*, "Njati" of the natives) may be found without much difficulty in certain neighbourhoods. Great herds frequent the Elephant Marsh Reserve, where they are protected. Patamangas, near the limestone hills on the Lower Shiré, was also for some time a favourite haunt of theirs, and may be so still. I have seen them also in the Limpasa Valley in West Nyasa, but perhaps the best place to seek them is the district of Chikala, where it marches with Portuguese territory.

Lions and leopards are plentiful all over British Central Africa, and do a good deal of damage, though, owing to the general prevalence of thick cover, they are less often seen than might be supposed. The lion of the country does not, as a rule, carry a fine mane; and this seems to bear out the theory advanced by several travellers and sportsmen, that the hair of the mane is apt to be pulled out by thorns and bushes, and attains its full abundance only in open regions.¹ Both the lion ("Simba": "Nkango") and the leopard ("Chisui": "Nyalugwi") often show great boldness in Central Africa, and are in the habit of

¹ Fine manes are, however, not unknown in Central Africa. The late Mr. R. G. Beswick shot a large lion at Zomba in 1896, whose full yellow mane would have done credit to any Somaliland specimen.

constantly prowling near houses and seizing dogs, goats, and other domestic animals. A good many natives are also killed by them at night, but only one instance has occurred within my own knowledge of a man having been attacked in the daytime, without provocation. This happened at Mlanje, where a native was killed by a leopard while engaged in hoeing his garden. Most natives declare that the leopard is more to be feared than the lion; and there is no doubt that, when thoroughly provoked and driven into a corner, he becomes, owing to his ferocity and great activity, extremely dangerous. On one occasion a leopard struck down three beaters of mine at a single charge, killing one and severely wounding the other two. The man who was killed sustained frightful injuries, the flesh of one buttock and of the whole back of the thigh being torn clean away from the bone, although it seemed to me, as I saw it, that the leopard merely dealt him a sharp pat in passing.

The ungainly wart hog (*Phacachoerus Aethiopicus*: "Monjiri" of the natives) is common enough all over the country. There is a peculiarity about the wart hog which is perhaps worth mentioning, as I have not seen it recorded elsewhere. Talking over the camp fire one evening, I remarked that the spoor round a wart hog's burrow¹ always led outward, and that I did not remember ever having seen any tracks pointing in the opposite direction. Somebody else who was present

¹ The wart hog does not, I fancy, dig burrows for himself, but takes possession of those excavated by other animals.

explained this by saying that he had once kept a tame wart hog, and had noticed that, when suddenly alarmed, it invariably retreated backwards into a drain where it had taken up its quarters. We may conclude, I suppose, that these beasts act in a similar way in the bush; and this at once accounts for the singularity of their spoor. The reason for these apparently odd tactics on the part of the wart hog is no doubt fear of being taken at a disadvantage, and a consequent anxiety to keep his face rather than his other extremity towards any possible foe. I shall never forget the first wart hog which I saw, in the wooded plains near the Shiré River. I had then just arrived from India, where, as everybody knows, the cult of the pig, from a sporting point of view, is almost as sacred as the cult of the fox in the Shires; and it was with amazement unspeakable that I beheld this travesty of a hog, with his high back, coarse mane, dropsical head, bulbous excrescences on either cheek,¹ and such a pair of curved and shining tusks as never were dreamed of by any pig-sticker from Coromandel to Malabar.

Besides the wart hog, we have in Central Africa the bush pig (*Potomachoerus*), a smaller and more ordinary-looking animal. Herds of zebra (*Equus Burchelli*: "Mbisi" of the Shiré natives, "Oboli" of the Atonga and Angoni) are everywhere common,²

¹ These tough pads are probably meant to protect the hogs when fighting with each other, as they do most savagely.

² Zebra are very fond of accompanying and mixing with antelopes. I have seen them at different times with eland, waterbuck, and hartebeest.

while of Central African antelopes the following is, I think, a complete list—

The greater koodoo . . .	<i>Strepsiceros kudu.</i>
The sable	<i>Hippotragus niger.</i>
The roan	<i>Hippotragus equinus.</i>
The eland	<i>Oreas canna.</i>
Lichtenstein's hartebeest . .	<i>Bubalis lichtensteini.</i>
The Nyasaland gnu	<i>Connochoetes taurinus johnstoni.</i>
The inyala or boo	<i>Tragelaphus angasi.</i>
The waterbuck	<i>Kobus ellipsiprinus.</i>
The reedbuck	<i>Cervicapra arundinum.</i>
The bushbuck	<i>Tragelaphus scriptus.</i>
The nsuala (Impala). . . .	<i>Aepyceros melampus.</i>
The oribi	<i>Ourebia hastata.</i>
The duyker	<i>Cephalophus grimmii.</i>
The klipspringer	<i>Oreotragus saltator.</i>

And in North-Eastern Rhodesia—

The sitatunga	<i>Tragelaphus spekei.</i>
The lechwe	<i>Kobus lechwe.</i>
The puku	<i>Kobus vardonii.</i>

Although some of the above are very local in their distribution, all are comparatively plentiful, with the exception of the inyala and, possibly, the koodoo. The only specimens of the inyala which I have seen were said to have been obtained from the neighbourhood of the Shiré River opposite Chikwawa. The koodoo ("Ndandala" of the Yao, "Ngoma" of the Anyanja) is less uncommon; in fact, it would perhaps be an exaggeration to call it rare, although as a rule only quite a few are killed in any one season.¹ The districts of South Nyasa and of the Upper Shiré, notably near Monkey Bay on the lake and Mvera on the river,

¹ This is accounted for, in some measure, by the extreme shyness of koodoo.



KOOIBOO.
From a sketch by the Author.

are good places for koodoo, which, however, may by chance be found almost anywhere in the neighbourhood of low hills, ravines and broken ground generally, for which they show a decided preference.

Could the votes of any number of sportsmen and naturalists be taken on the subject of beauty as exemplified in antelopes, the palm would, I think, be awarded to the koodoo. His colouration is remarkably pleasing; his shape is symmetrical; his movements are the perfection of grace and vigour; and his small nobly-carried head has a look of distinction fitly enhanced by his splendid horns, which form two massive open spirals, measuring sometimes as much as sixty inches apiece on the curve. When passing at speed through forest country, the bull koodoo¹ throws up his nose in such a manner as to bring his horns down nearly to the level of his withers, by which means he keeps them from collision with branches, etc., and is enabled to make his way through the bush with perfect certainty and ease.

Next to the koodoo the sable ("Mbalapi" of the Yao, "Mpalapala" of all other Nyasaland tribes) is perhaps the finest antelope on our list. Less

¹ The cows are hornless. I have often wondered why this should be the case with the females of some antelopes, while those of others are furnished with powerful horns. The koodoo, waterbuck, reedbuck, bushbuck, and impala, for example, live under much the same conditions and are liable to be attacked by the same enemies as the sable, roan, and eland; yet in the case of all the former the females are unarmed, while among the latter they carry horns some twenty or thirty inches long.

gracefully built than his rival, a mature bull sable is nevertheless an uncommonly handsome beast; sturdy and bold of carriage, with a very powerful neck and chest, high withers, a stiff thick mane and sweeping horns, beautifully arched and ringed, and 40 inches or more in length. The coat of an old bull is of the darkest shade of chocolate, with white markings on the face, belly and rump. The cows carry smaller horns, and are generally, though not invariably, much lighter in colour. Rightly has this magnificent antelope been called "the fighting sable"; for, when wounded or cornered, he will use his horns with desperate energy, and becomes exceedingly dangerous to approach. Even the lion does not attack him with impunity. I once saw the body of a recently shot lion which bore several curious scars, and, on asking the natives what had caused these scars, they at once replied, "Mpala-pala" (a sable). Fortunately sable are still abundant in Central Africa. The Shiré Highlands especially are full of them, and their heads and skins are among the commonest trophies to be seen.

The roan antelope ("Mperembe" of the Angoni and Ahenga) is found in some of the lake districts and in North-Eastern Rhodesia, where it replaces the sable, to which it is nearly related, and which in general appearance it somewhat strongly resembles, although it is easily distinguishable by its paler colouring and smaller horns. I first met with roan in the open down country between the Kavusi and Linyangwa rivers, near Ekwendeni in West Nyasa, and I have seen them in

the Henga Valley. They are also plentiful, I am told, near the Bua River in Marimba district. The only instance within my knowledge of a roan antelope ever having been killed in any part of the Shiré Highlands occurred in September 1902, when Captain Byrne, of the 2nd battalion King's African Rifles, shot one near the Upper Namazi River, between Zomba and Blantyre. I happened to be dining at the mess of the 2nd battalion, when Byrne returned from his shooting trip; and, on his remarking that he had killed a roan, I at once said that he must be mistaken and that he had probably got a light-coloured sable, which, since he had only recently come to Central Africa, he might easily have failed to identify. As, however, he persisted in his original statement, I went outside and examined the skin and horns, which, to my astonishment, I recognised immediately to be those of a bull roan. The animal was wandering about by itself when shot, and had probably been driven out of a herd for some reason—not, however, as so often happens, on account of age or sickness, for it was fairly young and in excellent condition.

That huge creature, the eland ("Mbunju" of the Yao, "Nchefu" of the Anyanja, "Zefu" of the Ahenga, "Mpefu" of the Angoni) is fairly common in the Shiré Highlands, in the valley of the Shiré River, in the Henga Valley, in the neighbourhood of Deep Bay (North Nyasa), and more or less all over the Protectorate. The term "antelope" seems almost a misnomer as applied to the eland, whose hump and dewlap, heavy build and com-

paratively short legs are all essentially bovine. Fat and sleepy as they look, however, eland are in fact very wary animals, and have a habit, when once disturbed, of going straight away without stopping to give the hunter a second chance, as do most antelopes. The bulls carry very massive horns, those of the cows being thinner and generally longer. Old bulls have a curious mat of black hair on the forehead, and are often of a slaty-blue colour, caused by the skin showing through the hair, as in the case of the nilghao of India. The younger animals have coats of a chestnut shade. To give some idea of the size of an eland, I may say that trying one day to sit down on the body of a full-grown specimen, which I had shot and which was lying on its side, I found that I could not do so without actually climbing on to the carcase, my feet then hanging clear of the ground by many inches. The flesh of the eland is excellent eating, somewhat resembling beef.

The hartebeest (native names "ngondo," "ngausi") is by far the commonest antelope to be found in British Central Africa, and, being in some respects rather stupid, is killed in considerable numbers both by mankind and by beasts of prey. This ugly, fiddle-headed creature has always struck me as having precisely the look which such a constantly-hunted animal might be expected to wear—an expression of bewildered melancholy, which even his naked skull retains in a marked degree, as it stares down from its nail on the wall like a comic *memento mori*.

Yet though his appearance is against him, and though his ubiquity becomes at times almost exasperating to the hunter in search of rarer or finer game, it is impossible not to feel a sneaking regard for the hartebeest. On him, in all probability, we tried our 'prentice hand; his stumpy, twisted horns were our first trophy; and by his opportune presence many a camp has been redeemed from hunger, and many a day from the reproach of an empty bag.

Nor must it be supposed that it is always an easy thing to slay the hartebeest outright. On the contrary, these antelopes are possessed of extraordinary vitality,¹ which often enables them to make good their escape after being repeatedly and severely wounded. As an illustration of this, I may mention that a very fine bull hartebeest was once lost to me under the following circumstances. It was late in the afternoon when I first caught sight of him. I had already shot two reedbuck, and had about as much meat as I required for my camp; so that, under ordinary circumstances, I should have let the hartebeest alone. The horns of this particular animal, however, being, as I could see through my field-glasses, exceptionally large, I resolved to try and secure him. He was feeding quietly at a distance of about 200 yards, but behind a cow which stood between him and me directly in the line of fire. I was carrying a little .303 rifle at the time, with

¹ The sable and the waterbuck run the hartebeest very close in this respect, and many of the smaller antelopes are hardly less tenacious of life.

a powerful Gibbs-Metford Express in reserve. After waiting for some time, the cow began to move slowly forward ; and directly she was quite clear of the bull I gave the latter two shots from the smaller weapon, one of which struck him in the body, the other in a foreleg. Despite these wounds, he at once made off ; and, though he could not keep up with the rest of the herd, it was only after a long chase and several misses that I overtook him and hit him again. He blundered heavily at the shot, and, after going on rather feebly for a few yards, halted and stood quite still with head lowered, apparently on the verge of a collapse. Being particularly anxious to bag him, not only on account of his horns, but because I had already wounded him so badly, I now exchanged the '303 for the Express ; and, restraining my gun-bearer, who wanted to cut his throat without more ado, I crept up to within 80 yards, and sitting down, fired an elaborately careful shot. The heavy bullet struck him with a loud thud. As the smoke cleared, I saw him still standing ; but, though the rifle with which I had fired was a double one, I hesitated to press the second trigger, feeling quite sure that the beast would drop dead in another moment. I can only suppose that, in the very uncertain light (the sun had by this time almost entirely disappeared), I must have missed the animal's shoulder and hit him too far back. At any rate, instead of falling, he pulled himself together with a sudden shiver, as though galvanised into fresh activity, and, to my unbounded astonishment,

actually started off again. I now fired the left barrel in a hurry and made a clean miss. The gun-bearer, with my spare cartridges, had remained behind when I had commenced my last stalk; and before I could reload, the hartebeest had disappeared. We followed his blood-spoor, which as may be imagined was profuse, for a considerable distance; but total darkness presently intervened, and we were forced to return to camp. That same night there fell a deluge of rain which effectually removed all trace of the blood; and, though I sent men next day to search for the body of the buck, it was never found.¹

The waterbuck ("Nakodzwe" of the Anyanja, "Ndogolo" of the Yao, "Ipiva" of the Angoni) is quite common all over the country, but is perhaps rather more plentiful in the Lake districts than in the Shiré Highlands. The best places for waterbuck that I have personally visited are the neighbourhood of Cape McClear and Monkey Bay in South Nyasa, the Duangwa River between Marimba and West Nyasa, and the Upper Rukuru River between West and North Nyasa; but it is scarcely necessary to specify any particular localities, as the antelope in question may be found in almost any part of the country where the conditions are suitable. The waterbuck is a large animal, compactly built, with short legs, a thick coat of hair, and a lean, handsome head.

¹ I owe it to the Gibbs-Metford rifle in question to say that it had already proved itself a most reliable weapon, and had given excellent results on various kinds of game—a fact which makes the circumstance recorded still more surprising.

The male carries powerful horns (about 25 or 26 inches is a good measurement in British Central Africa), curved slightly forward and generally very pale in colour. A variety of waterbuck discovered by Mr. Richard Crawshay, and called after him Crawshay's waterbuck (*Cobus Crawshayi*), inhabits the northern lake districts, and is distinguished from the ordinary variety by a slight difference in the shade of colouring and, more unmistakably, by the absence of the white mark on the rump so characteristic of the common waterbuck.

The flesh of the waterbuck, unlike that of any other Central African antelope, is exceedingly rank and tough, that of the old bulls in particular being absolutely uneatable. It is said that even lions avoid the waterbuck on this account, but I am inclined to think that a more probable reason is to be found in the courage of this antelope, which, like the sable, has a great reputation for defending itself when brought to bay.

The reedbuck ("Mboyu" of the Anyanja, "Ndopi" of the Yao, "Imzizi" of the Angoni) is everywhere extremely plentiful, more so perhaps than any other antelope except the hartebeest. Indeed, I can hardly call to mind any neighbourhood in British Central Africa where reedbuck cannot be found in considerable numbers. Reedbuck are of medium size. Their horns curve forward at the tips like those of the waterbuck, but rarely exceed 15 or 16 inches in length (13 or 14 inches is a fair head). Their tails are very large and bushy, with a white under-surface; and, when



HEAD OF A BUSHBUCK.

From drawings by the Author



HEAD OF A WART HOG.

suddenly disturbed, they will dart away jerking these tails exactly as a rabbit cocks his scut, and uttering at the same time a loud and most peculiar whistle. Another odd trick which I have noticed in them is that of stopping and shaking their heads violently on receiving a mortal wound. Reedbuck generally go about singly or in pairs, but I have seen as many as eighteen of them together—not in a herd exactly, but within a few yards of one another.

The bushbuck ("Mbawala" of the Yao and Anyanja, "Mbabala" of the Angoni) is a graceful, pretty creature, slightly smaller than the reedbuck, with a reddish, chestnut coat, which in old animals often turns to a deep grizzled brown or black on the shoulders, flanks and legs. The sides of the bushbuck are irregularly marked with streaks and spots of white, as in the nearly-allied harnessed antelope, and there are white patches on the face and fetlocks. The hair on the spine and rump is rather long; and the tail, as in the reedbuck, is comparatively large and bushy. The males carry keeled and slightly twisted horns, of the usual tragelaphine type, wrinkled at the base, and measuring on an average from 12 to 15 inches in full-grown animals. The best horns in my possession are $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, but I have seen a pair over 17 inches in length. As his name implies, the bushbuck is essentially a bush-dweller, and is rarely found far from cover of some sort. I have shot one or two bushbuck in the plains; but, as a rule, they prefer hilly and broken ground, especially the so-called "Jack-in-the-Beanstalk"

country of the Zomba and Mlanje plateaux, where natural grass meadows are interspersed with dense clumps of trees and scored across with water-courses and ravines full of bracken, sage bush, and similar vegetation. The Zomba uplands, when I first visited them in 1897 and for some time afterwards, were a very favourite haunt of bushbuck; in fact, the best place for these antelope that I have ever known. There was no human dwelling on the mountain in those days, and the buck were little disturbed; but eventually a sanatorium and one or two cottages were built there, and in the year 1900, to make matters worse, a pack of wild dogs came up and harried the whole plateau to such an extent that the bushbuck have since in a great measure abandoned it.

Hardly any form of sport is more delightful, in my opinion, than bushbuck shooting in the hills, which has, moreover, the advantage of being practicable during the rainy season, when almost all other game is hidden in the rank, lowland jungles. Judging from my own experience of them, I should rate bushbuck among the most unwary of animals. I have repeatedly stalked them in comparatively short grass to within 60 or 80 yards, using no particular caution in my method of approach; and I have often known a buck to turn and stare fixedly at me for a few seconds, and then drop his head again and go on feeding with the utmost unconcern. Many natives, especially in the Lakè districts, have a superstitious dislike of the bushbuck, and sometimes refuse to eat its flesh (which is nevertheless excellent) or

even to skin it. I have asked natives why this is so, and have received the unconvincing answer that the bushbuck is red, and that all wild animals of that colour are bad. A much more likely reason, however, is that bushbuck are fond of frequenting native burying-places, where, of course, they are hardly ever disturbed.

Nswala or Impala ("Nswala" of the Yao and Anyanja, "Impala" of the Angoni) are very common in some localities and entirely absent from others. They are not to be found in any part of the Shiré Highlands proper, where the elevation is doubtless too great for them, but in most parts of the Shiré Valley, on both sides of the river, they abound in herds of from twenty to sixty or more. Nswala rarely stray very far from water of some kind, and frequent a special type of country, instantly recognisable, in Central Africa at any rate, by the presence of a certain tree, which I learnt to associate so closely with these antelopes that I used to call it, in my own mind, the "nswala tree," until I heard the natives speak of it as "sania." This sania is tall and of rather elegant growth, not unlike that of a small English elm, but its general appearance is somewhat spoilt, as is the case with so many Central African trees, by a sparse and meagre foliage. The bark is pale grey in colour, so pale as to look nearly white at a distance, and is deeply serrated. The leaves are heart-shaped and split down the middle. Quite young sania trees often grow close together in large patches resembling hazel copses. These

trees affect very dry and sandy soil, and seem to have the power of killing grass, moss, and other lowly vegetation, the ground in their immediate vicinity being either quite bare or else covered with thin thorny plants; although wherever a break occurs in the forest, the usual coarse, thick jungle grass re-appears. As soon as the hunter finds himself in a country of this sort, and, above all, notes the presence of sania trees, interspersed as they often are with mimosas and baobabs, he may reckon with tolerable certainty on finding nswala. They are alert and restless animals, but seem to have great difficulty in locating any sudden, loud noise like the report of a rifle, and will often stand irresolute while several shots are fired at them, uncertain from which direction danger threatens. When once they have made up their minds, however, they will gallop away at great speed, in single file, leaping high over any bushes or fallen timber in their path. They usually run more or less in a circle, and it is sometimes possible to cut them off by striking quickly through the woods at angle to their line of retreat, but to effect this often induces such breathlessness as to make it impossible to put in a steady shot when the herd is eventually sighted.

The sexes appear to separate for a certain portion of the year—possibly during the period of gestation. In July 1898, and again in August 1901, I was hunting near Mtengula's village, opposite to Matope on the Shiré River, a favourite haunt of nswala, and noticed that the bucks and does kept scrupulously apart from each other.

The does were much the tamer, and on one occasion I stalked a herd of them to within 50 or 60 yards, in order to satisfy myself that they were really unaccompanied by any bucks, which proved to be the case. Sometimes nswala, on being suddenly alarmed, will utter a loud bark, rather like that of a bushbuck, but shriller. I have heard this bark only once myself, but my solitary experience is corroborated by the testimony of others.

The males carry lyre-shaped annulated horns, the rings divided from each other by deep notches and set rather wide apart. With their brilliant chestnut coats and shapely limbs, nswala are undoubtedly among the most beautiful of all the lesser African antelopes. Only to watch them is a joy as they tread carefully and gently along the narrow forest ways, stopping every now and then with long necks outstretched, ears pricked, and dewy dark eyes wide open in wonder or distrust; or, again, when they race like mad creatures through the grass and thorns, between the tree-stems, over the dry watercourses, bounding recklessly, at times almost as it seems aimlessly, into the air, to vanish at last from the ken of the crouching hunter like a file of pale shadows.

Those little creatures, the oribi and the duyker (both known to the Shiré natives as "Gwapi" and to the Angoni as "Isya"), are common everywhere. They will often lie until nearly trodden on, and will then bolt away in a tremendous hurry, dodging and twisting through the grass like

rabbits; under which circumstances, as may be imagined, it is not easy to hit them with a rifle, although they may easily be killed with a smooth-bore and a charge of shot. A small buck (Sharpe's antelope: *Raphiceros Sharpei*¹), which I am told closely resembles the duyker, has also been found in the country, but I have never seen a specimen.

The pretty little klipspringer is to be met with wherever the ground is sufficiently steep and broken for him. He is a true chamois in his habits, delighting to venture into the most break-neck places he can find, and there skip about from one ledge of rock to another. His coat is of a greenish-grey colour, the hairs that compose it being singularly harsh and brittle in texture, and so loose as to come out freely when the animal is handled. The klipspringer, as I observed in the case of one kept in a state of semi-captivity, has the habit of depositing its excreta day after day in the same spot; and I am inclined to think that this trick is shared by many other African antelopes besides the one named, as I have repeatedly noticed in the woods the dung of oribi, duyker, nswala, etc., disposed in large conical heaps which must have taken some time to accumulate. The same practice is said to be adopted by some of the Indian antelopes, and by the guanaco of South America.

The remaining antelopes on my list (the sitatunga, lechwe and puku) are, as I have said,

¹ So called after Mr. Alfred Sharpe.

practically confined to North-Eastern Rhodesia, where it has not been my good fortune to hunt.

And now for a few words on the subject of the "ulendo." Perhaps I had better begin by explaining as well as I can what the word means.

CHAPTER IX

THE ULENDU

It is impossible to help remarking from time to time how curiously the scope of highly perfected modern language fails in certain primitive directions. There is scarcely a native dialect, however rude, that cannot boast some forcible and comprehensive phrases, referring usually to life in its simpler aspects, for which no precise equivalent can be found in the ample vocabularies of twentieth-century Europe. The term "ulendo" is one of these. Primarily signifying a travelling or hunting party or caravan, and including also the abstract idea of a journey, it may be rendered approximately by the word "expedition," but its whole meaning embraces a good deal more than can be conveyed by any single phrase in our language. Few men who have lived and wandered in Nyasaland can hear this expressive word without a quick instinctive remembrance of the varied scenes and incidents of African travel—of tents struck by moonlight and starlight, and pitched again in sunset glow; of fresh, sweet mornings and long hunting in quiet *dambo*,¹ where the new grass is budding green in the tracks of the bush fires; of the

¹ A *dambo* is an open glade in the woods.

thirst and weariness of noon; of cosy camps in deep mimosa woods, and of the darkness and strange noises of the forest night.

The proper management of an ulendo depends partly on a natural aptitude for organisation, but still more on a knowledge of the country itself and of the little peculiarities of the "tenga-tenga" man, or native carrier, who represents the unit of transport in Central Africa. It should be constantly borne in mind that the Bantu negro is hardly a child of light, and that remarkable displays of intelligence are not, therefore, to be expected of him. At the same time he is a good worker, within certain limits, if sensibly treated and liberally fed—particularly the latter. It is indeed impossible to overrate the importance of adequate rations on the ulendo. The heart and brain, the thews and muscles of the negro are all in his stomach. Keep that organ satisfied, and your man will do his share of work twice over and never grumble. In most parts of British Central Africa a really good shot will find small difficulty in providing meat for a considerable number of people; and if his reputation as a successful hunter be widespread, whole villages will rise and follow him of their own accord, ready to perform any task that he may assign to them in return for a share in the game killed. But a moderate performer with the rifle, such as myself, who must work hard for a small bag and is not always free from the reproach of an empty one, will find it necessary, where game is scarce or wild, to distribute food to his servants in the

shape of ufa (native flour) or something of the sort. It is much better to do this than to issue money or cloth, which the men will often keep to pay for a feast at their villages later on, foregoing the immediate meal or restricting it to an insufficient quantity, with the natural result that they complain of being tired, lag behind on the road and disorganise the whole expedition. Another golden rule is to make the tenga-tenga leave early with their loads, so that they may keep well in front from start to finish of the day. No man who has not experienced it can quite imagine the annoyance of reaching one's camping ground, after a tedious journey, at four or five in the afternoon, to find that the tenga-tenga are an hour's march in the rear. If any articles chance to have arrived, they will, in the nature of things, be those which their owner does not at the moment require, while the missing loads are nearly certain to include his most immediate wants—his tent, chair and table, his soap, whisky and tea. All this may sound no great matter; but, when a man is hungry, thirsty and tired, and anxious to get his tent pitched and all made snug before the advent of darkness, such delays are wont to irritate him out of all proportion to their actual gravity.

The question of the relative merits and demerits, as personal servants, gun-bearers and so forth, of the various tribes inhabiting Nyasaland and the Shiré Highlands is a somewhat vexed one. The Wa-Yao are undoubtedly the most intelligent, and therefore the most generally popular among Europeans; but personally, while

I admit the superiority of Yao servants in the house or office, I have always had a preference for the companionship, on a rough journey or hunting trip, of the up-standing, jovial Atonga. It is true that Atonga are incorrigibly rowdy, and, if not kept well in hand, are too apt to indulge their exuberant spirits in stealing fowls, getting drunk on "pombey" (native beer), and tampering with their neighbours' wives. Offences such as these, since they tend to excite the resentment of the injured villagers, should be punished on the spot with the "chikoti," which is a simple but very business-like whip made from the hide of the hippopotamus. From six to twelve lashes, according to the gravity of the offence, will generally answer all the purposes of a deterrent. Apart from the propensity referred to, I have always found the Atonga most useful and willing servants. The vein of *enfantillage* which characterises all the Bantu races in a greater or less degree is very marked in this tribe, showing itself in their simplicity, their enthusiasm and their lightness of heart, and in the boundless confidence with which they regard a master who has won their liking and respect. Even their occasional fits of sulkiness are, like those of children, brief and harmless; and their general temperament needs only a little tact in the handling to be capable of great manifestations of endurance and fidelity.

With regard to the selection of travelling and camp gear, considerable care should be taken. It is easy to indulge in picturesque rhodomontade

about the charms of "roughing it" and the limited requirements of man in his natural condition, as some people are wont to do who know little or nothing of life in wild countries. The twentieth-century European does not revert so easily to the simplicity of the savage, and he will find that the discomforts and dangers of the bush and jungle are in themselves quite sufficient to test his fortitude, without being accentuated by his own neglect. The climate of Central Africa, though scarcely, I think, so bad as its reputation, is still a climate with which it is very far from safe to take liberties, and one which will revenge itself cruelly on those who defy it. I have noticed again and again that it is the most experienced travellers who make themselves most comfortable, and who are the last to run *avoidable* risks in the way of exposure, and so forth. The truth is that nothing can be either so cosy or so dreary, according to the manner of its equipment, as a tent in the wilderness. Sometimes it is a mere shelter, and a cheerless one at that; sometimes, on the other hand, a veritable bower of rest, to which the traveller turns at eventime as to a home. And really very little is required to make the difference. A waterproof ground-cloth, a bedstead (with mosquito-net), a folding-table, an upright chair and an easy one, a lamp, books and writing materials, are practically all that is needed in the way of furniture. The best kind of bedstead, in my opinion, is an oblong frame of light strong wood, with strips of hide stretched across it to form a network. The natives use

grass ropes for the lashings, but hide is more supple and makes a perfect support for the body. For bedding, blankets and *not sheets* should be taken. During the wet season, or when in the neighbourhood of swampy ground, it is a good plan to cover the floor of the tent with a layer of dry reeds, and to cut a drain outside it, in order to carry off as much moisture as possible.

If the traveller has good servants, however, he need give himself little concern about the arrangement of his camp. Nearly all natives have a liking for this sort of work, and with a little experience soon learn to make things comfortable and secure without their master's supervision. Should a night attack by lions or leopards be at all likely to occur, it is as well to have a gun or rifle and cartridges within reach; but I scarcely think it wise to load one's weapon before going to sleep, although of course it is very commonly done. A smooth-bore is easier to use in the dark than a rifle, and, when charged with heavy shot such as treble A, will kill or disable at close range any soft-skinned animal that exists. But beasts of prey, although they abound almost everywhere in Central Africa, and sometimes make a great noise at night, will rarely venture to molest a camp, surrounded as it always is by fires, much less to force their way into a tent which, with its mysterious arrangement of ropes and pegs, must strike them as being too much like a trap.¹

As for the open bivouac so much belauded by

¹ I know only one instance of a wild beast (a lion) entering a tent and seizing the occupant.

travellers in more temperate climes, it is a form of camp which no man in his senses would adopt in Central Africa, if he could help it. Circumstances, however, may compel him to bivouac upon occasion. In such a case it should be remembered that a wall is, on the whole, more necessary to us than a roof, and that a low thick bush or ridge of soil, which intercepts the prevailing wind, makes a better shelter than any spreading tree. A man in prone position lies very near to Mother Earth, and needs much less protection than might be supposed; in fact, a barrier 18 or 20 inches high will effectually shield him, provided that he gets as close to it as he can. When preparing to bivouac in this fashion on the bare soil, a hole should be dug sufficiently large to admit the hip, thus bringing the rest of the body on a level with the ground. But the truth is that one very rarely comes to such extremities as this in Central Africa, where sticks and grass abound, and where accordingly a shelter can nearly always be put together in a few minutes. The natives themselves are very clever at making such rough little huts, and, when working on the roads or otherwise engaged in the open, often spend their nights in them for months at a time.

Consumable stores should be selected carefully; and the traveller will do well to include, in small quantities, any articles of food or drink for which he has a particular fancy, not forgetting those which may be classed under the head of medical comforts, to be used in sickness or as occasional

variants from the everyday fare. Few can hope to be always exempt from indisposition on the ulendo, and it is precisely when a man returns to camp weary or ill that he begins to long for those creature comforts, the absence of which he at first cheerfully disregarded. Let it be remembered, too, that what is no more than ordinary comfort at home becomes, by piquancy of contrast, luxury in the wilderness, and that such little conveniences and delicacies as can reasonably be included in the traveller's kit will be appreciated by him with a quite peculiar intensity when he has left civilisation far behind him.

As for medicines, I have hardly ever taken any in Africa myself, except quinine, and that only upon occasion. Nearly everybody who has spent much time in Africa has his own theory about quinine; and I believe that nearly everybody's theory is correct as applied to himself; for quinine acts very differently upon different constitutions, and a malarial country soon teaches men to know their own particular constitutions accurately enough in relation to fever and the preventives of that malady.

Dysentery is naturally a common complaint where so much of the water is stagnant and impure. Below 3000 feet, drinking water should always be either boiled or filtered, or both; but for short journeys it is best to bring a cask or two of sweet water from the hills. Natives will drink readily from the filthiest pool without attempting to clear it in any way, although I have once or twice seen them strain exceptionally thick and

foul water through an improvised filter of grass shaped like a hollow cone.

Lastly, be it said that on a long ulendo, for whatever purpose undertaken, it is always well to have a companion. I do not mean to say that two men ought to shoot or explore together on the same beat day after day, for that simply means that neither would accomplish so much work or get so much sport as he would by himself; but in camp two are in all ways better than one, if only to ensure aid in case of sudden illness or other emergency.

As regards the time of day most favourable to the hunter, it is quite certain that the sooner he is upon his ground the better his chances will be. Where other kinds of work are concerned, the advantages of very early rising may perhaps be open to question; but when the pursuit of wild game is in view, there can be no doubt as to the imperative necessity of getting up very early indeed—not merely *with* the sun but an hour *before* it, so as to render it possible to dress, breakfast, and be actually out in the woods while the stars are still in the sky, or at any rate with the very first streak of dawn. The difference which even thirty minutes may make in what we complacently call our “luck” is far greater than might be supposed. Just before daylight is the hour when all wild animals begin to move back from their drinking-pools towards the places where they intend to lie up during the heat of the day, and the man who crosses the game-tracks at that hour may often take his pick of half-

a-dozen herds. Moreover, the coolness of the air and the tenderness and purity of the light during the morning are enormously in favour of the hunter, who can then exert himself without incurring fatigue or thirst, and can calculate his distances with a minimum risk of error. On the actual details of his craft, such as stalking, tracking, night-watching, and so forth, I shall not, for several reasons, attempt to enlarge. In the first place, this volume is not intended to deal at length with the subject of sport; and when I began this chapter I resolved that it should be a short one. In the second place, it is open to much doubt whether the science of woodcraft can be satisfactorily taught by written words; and lastly, if it can be so taught, there are already in existence many works compiled by men whose lifelong experience of wild game and wild countries has enabled them to practically exhaust the subject. In order, however, to give some general idea of what an ulendo in British Central Africa is like, I append the following notes from my diary. I have chosen this particular extract because, although no rare or dangerous game was killed on the trip described, yet it conveys a fair notion of what the sportsman may expect under ordinary circumstances.

"On the 16th (of August) I started on an ulendo to meet B—— at Matope. Went first to Mpimbi, and then to the small village of Dowa, a little further down the river (Shiré) on the left bank, where I camped. Grass burning well all round here.

"Next day (the 17th) to Gwaza's for lunch. Kaserema of Ntondwe was here buying fish. He seemed pleased to see me, and told me of some elephants which had recently passed near his village, followed by native poachers from Chiradzulu. I remarked that he ought to have sent me word of this at once; and he promised to do so in future, should occasion arise. K—— is an Alolo, which he describes as 'mozi mozi Makua' (same as Makua). He came to Zomba district only two years ago, from beyond Chilwa, but I am glad to have him among us, as he is intelligent and friendly. While on my way from Gwaza's to Matope, I met B——, who had come up from the latter place, expecting my arrival. He had been hunting for two days round about Pampina and Pampindu, and had bagged three head of game—two nswala (impala) and a hartebeest. He reports that there are now a large number of hippos in the pool above Pampindu Rapids. After tea, we crossed the river in canoes, and made for Mtengula's village, near which we camped. The sun is very hot down here, but, *per contra*, the nights are most bitterly cold; and having only one blanket, I was obliged to pile my coat, shirt, and trousers on to my bed. This cold must, I think, be due to the damp, thick fog which rises from the river after dark and penetrates everything.

"We started out next morning (the 18th) just before sunrise in opposite directions. Before I had gone 200 yards from the camp I killed a gwapi (duyker), but had bad luck afterwards, and saw

nothing but a herd of zebra and a waterbuck, which latter I wounded, followed for some distance, and ultimately lost. There must be lots of game about here, as the ground is literally cut to pieces with old and new spoor of nswala, hartebeest, waterbuck, gwapi, wart hog, and zebra. I saw also the tracks and dung of koodoo, eland, buffalo, and leopards. It is good stalking country, the baobabs and sania trees, of which the forests chiefly consist, growing not too close together, while thick grass is only met with here and there in ravines, etc. Low thorny bushes, however, abound, and there is a nasty prickly creeper which clings to the ground and obliges one to tread delicately. Nothing could be sweeter than sunrise in these great woods. At that hour everything combines to charm; the pure, tender light that one never sees at any other time of day, the air mild yet fresh, the coo and flutter of doves in high branches, the merry piping of finches in the grass, the vista of trees, trees everywhere, their myriad stems shading away into a dim curtain of greys and greens. And then the constant expectation of finding game, the strong bracing of the nerves, the exultant sense of adventure, freedom, space. . . . I came across only one village, in which I noticed a somewhat elaborate grave, built in tiers of plastered mud, with the worldly goods of the deceased (a chief) displayed on and near it, his white umbrella being spread over the top like a dome. Reached camp again at eleven o'clock. B—— returned almost at the same time. He had got among a lot of nswala and had killed three

nice bucks, against which my solitary little gwapi made a poor show. We both went out again at half-past three, and this time I saw a good deal of game. First of all a small herd of waterbuck, which, however, would not let me get anywhere near them; then a herd of nswala; but as these were all does I left them alone, and was rewarded by coming upon a herd of bucks shortly afterwards. One of these I killed—an old fellow with good horns. He showed great vitality, being struck first of all in the lateral centre of the body, but too far back; then low through the neck, and finally through both shoulders, continuing to run till the last shot brought him down. By way of contrast, the next thing I killed dropped dead to the first bullet. I was walking through a thicket of young sania trees, about two feet high, when a gwapi scuttled out, like a rabbit, at the other end. I fired two shots, both of which were clean misses, and had just slipped a third cartridge into the breech of my rifle, when I saw a bushbuck standing about 50 or 60 yards away, apparently trying to make out whence the noise had come. I hit this buck at the junction of the neck and shoulders, severing the vertebræ, and he fell so instantaneously that he seemed to vanish into the air. I literally did not see him fall; and though he was so close when I fired, it took me several minutes to find his body. After this I tramped for a long distance without seeing any more game, excepting another herd of doe nswala. Natives must frequent these forests, for at intervals along the path their little bird-traps

are hung on the bushes and reeds. I returned to camp along the riverside.

"The riparian scenery from here right down to the Murchison Cataracts at Kalambizi is remarkably luxuriant and beautiful, the edge of the water being screened by a dense fringe of Nile grass, *Phragmites* reeds and other aquatic vegetation, behind which rise thickets of palms and other trees, notably the tall lovely mimosas, with their salmon-pink stems and flat tops, and the wide-spreading, heavily-foliaged 'Mungongomwe.' Just before I got back to camp, an annoying thing happened. I was crossing a small 'dambo' (open glade), when the native guide who was with me, a raw savage recruited from Mtengula's village, suddenly caught me by the wrist, pulling me down into the grass, and pointed out a grand old bull waterbuck standing at the far end of the dambo, about 150 yards from us, and close to the edge of the bush. I saw the buck quite well, and was just raising my rifle to fire, when the guide, for some unaccountable reason, perhaps because he thought I was looking in the wrong direction, seized me forcibly by the scruff of the neck, and at the same moment the waterbuck began to trot rapidly away. Before I could recover myself and pull the trigger he was nearly out of sight in the now darkening woods, and the shot resulted in a miss. Most men can name some particular kind of game beast, in hunting which they have been attended by singularly bad luck. Personally I always seem to be unfortunate with waterbuck, although

they present a big mark and are, if anything, less difficult to stalk than most antelopes. It was late when I got back to camp. B—— had killed nothing this time, but our united bags for the day amounted to six head : viz. four nswala, one bushbuck, and one gwapi, so there was quite enough meat for our men.

" Being rather tired, I overslept myself next morning (the 19th), and, to make matters worse, shot very badly when I went out, and returned empty-handed. Found old Chegaru waiting for me. He had heard of my being in the neighbourhood, and had come up the river to see me. B—— returned about noon rather exhausted after a seven hours' tramp, but in high spirits, having killed a fine bull eland with very massive horns. He spent more than an hour stalking this beast, which was accompanied by several cows. Having so much meat, supplemented by presents of meal, etc. from the natives, neither of us went out in the evening. I amused myself by shooting pigeons with a rook-rifle from my tent-door. These birds are very numerous, and fill the woods with the pleasant sound of their voices and wings. They are not bad eating either, as an occasional change from antelope meat. A dance took place in the evening at Mtengula's, and I went over to see it by myself, B—— electing to go to bed early. It was the usual weird but rather monotonous performance—an unceasing stream of men and women prancing round a big fire to the accompaniment of a low chanting song, varied by

clapping of hands and the sound of drums and rattles. The master of the ceremonies was a man rather elaborately dressed up with feathers and cats'-tails, who seemed to be a professional dancer, and kept running across and across the circle, leaping and skipping in the maddest way, as though to encourage the others to increased exertions. These dances must take it out of the performers a good deal, and I doubt whether they could go on hour after hour as they do, were it not for their pombey (millet-beer), of which they consume ample quantities.

"Next morning (20th) we broke up camp, and B—— and I separated; he to return to Zomba, while I went up the left bank of the river for one more day's shooting. Pitched my tent a few miles from Gwaza's, and thence started westward at three o'clock in the afternoon towards the Kirk mountains. After walking for about two hours, I came upon a long narrow dambo, right in the middle of which was a herd of elands. For half-an-hour or so I remained quite still, watching these fine animals through my field-glasses. Only three were standing up in what looked rather a listless attitude, switching their tails, while the remainder were lying down in the grass. I judged them to be about 200 yards from the edge of the wood at its nearest point; and as they showed no disposition to move any closer, I proceeded to stalk them, keeping well under cover all the way; but on arriving opposite to where they had been, I found to my disgust that the whole herd had

crossed over to the other side, some 500 yards distant. They could not possibly have got my scent, because the wind was blowing directly from them to me; but I fancy they must have seen enough to rouse their suspicions, for, after looking fixedly in my direction for a few minutes, they all began to walk away slowly to the low end of the dambo. I hurried along parallel with them, still keeping under shelter of the woods, but they never gave me a chance, and eventually broke into a lumbering run and disappeared altogether. It was now getting dark; and having wasted so much time in trying to stalk the elands, I had to go back to camp with an empty bag.

“Early next morning (the 21st) the men woke me to say that there was a wart hog quite close to the tent. On going out in my pyjamas, I found that this was the case, and killed the hog—a small one with poor tusks. Later on I came across some hartebeest, which I fired at several times and missed, and a herd of nswala, out of which I bagged a fairly good buck. The latter, on being struck, bolted at such a pace that I thought he was going clean away; but after galloping for about 100 yards he collided with tremendous force against a tree and, turning a complete somersault, fell over dead. In consequence of a slight attack of fever, stayed in camp all the afternoon. Much bothered by black midges, which swarmed into the tent and nearly drove me mad. Plenty of guinea-fowl about here. My cook, who is a bit of a pot-hunter, borrowed my

gun, and, sallying forth just at the time when these birds fly up into the trees to roost, bagged six of them with one shot. During the night a vile hyæna, attracted by the meat of the game which I had killed the day before, came prowling and howling round the camp. I turned out twice to try for a shot at the nasty brute, but he was too sharp for me.

“Early on the following morning (the 22nd) I started on my return to Zomba, a journey of about thirty miles, mostly uphill, so I did pretty well in getting back at three o'clock in the afternoon . . .”

In conclusion, I should like to say a few words—a very few words will suffice—on the much-discussed topic of rifles. The question of the relative merits of different calibres has long been a somewhat vexed one, and will probably remain so, complicated as it must always be by the tastes and whims of individual sportsmen, and by the variety of conditions under which game is hunted in different parts of the world. There can, however, be little doubt that the vogue of *very* heavy rifles is over. That their vogue lasted as long as it did is due in no small measure to the authority of men like Sir Samuel Baker, who was not only their persistent advocate in his books and conversation, but demonstrated in a highly convincing manner what could be done in practice against large and dangerous animals. The principle laid down by that famous hunter, namely, that a big beast needs a violent shock to disable it, must of course always hold

good ; and to pretend that a rifle such as the '303 or '256 (Mannlicher) is a perfectly safe and efficient weapon for all-round shooting, is folly. There are, however, certain circumstances, lately arisen, which should be carefully borne in mind in determining the present value of the testimony adduced by Baker and his school, and foremost among these is the remarkable degree of perfection to which the manufacture of all manner of sporting arms has been brought. In Baker's time no rifle of a less calibre than, say, '577 was seriously intended by its maker for use upon animals like elephants or buffalo, and smaller weapons when brought into action against such game were apt to prove dangerously ineffective. No doubt 4, 8 and 12 bores still have their uses ; and if a man can afford to include one or two of them in his battery, well and good ; but they are no longer indispensable, except possibly where elephants are the exclusive objects of pursuit.¹ A rifle of the type of the '461 (Gibbs-Metford), with its long heavy bullet, can be as thoroughly relied on for general use against dangerous game as any weapon ever constructed. Moreover, a double-barrelled rifle of this description need not weigh more than eleven and a half pounds, whereas the weight of very large bores is such that a second barrel renders them almost unmanageable in the hands of a man of ordinary physique. I hardly think that enough stress has been laid in

¹ Mr. Alfred Sharpe, to whose great experience of elephants I have already referred, habitually shoots these huge animals with a Lee-Metford.

sporting literature on the supreme value of the extra barrel in an emergency, as when the hunter is confronted by a charging animal. His life in such a case will probably depend on the readiness of his shooting ; and no magazine, snap action or extracting mechanism that has yet been invented will enable him to fire two successive shots as rapidly as from a double-barrelled weapon, which requires but two twitches of the trigger-finger to discharge a couple of bullets almost simultaneously if need be.

Such, however, is the perfection of the modern rifle in all its forms that, within certain limits, it really does not matter very much what particular pattern may be chosen. Accustomed as we are to arms of precision, it is in truth scarcely possible for us to realise how far they have shorn hunting of its difficulties and dangers, or to form any just idea of the disadvantages under which our fathers and grandfathers laboured in the pursuit of game. But take any muzzle-loading weapon, such as some men still living were accustomed to use in their youth against the fiercest beast of the jungle, and put it beside an express rifle of the present day. Regard the cumbrous proportions of the old weapon, test its excruciating weight upon the wrist and fore-arm, remark the long barrel, the coarse sights, the clumsy locks, the antiquated paraphernalia of ramrod, cap-box, wad-bag, and powder-flask ; think what it must have been to load it, perhaps in front of a wounded leopard or buffalo, to draw the ramrod, drive down one after another the

various parts of the charge, replace the rod in its groove, adjust the cap on the nipple; think of the risk of the bullet jamming in the barrel, the chances of a missfire, the punishing recoil, the blinding smoke; then turn to the modern rifle, lying like a beautiful toy in its polished case, with its rubber heel-plate, pistol-grip, low hammers, extractor, snap lever, and smokeless cartridges, its standard sight regulated to 200 yards, its tangent sights to 1000; note how graceful are its lines, how easy its balance, how quick, strong and simple its action, how high its velocity, how long its trajectory, how exquisite its accuracy, how deadly its power. Truly the art of the gunsmith has revolutionised the art of the hunter. Yet is the triumph not wholly with the rising generation. Something of good-natured contempt for modern artifice and for conditions rendered thereby too easy mingles, as I think, with the admiration which old sportsmen readily bestow upon the wonderful weapons of the age. A distinguished soldier of eighty years, one of the most successful hunters that ever touched a trigger, was looking one day at a new rifle which I had bought for use in Africa. He picked it up, put it to his shoulder, tried the locks, looked at the sights, asked me a few questions about its shooting powers, and laid it quietly down again. "Ah," he remarked, shaking his head, "if I had only had such a weapon as that when I was young. Hunting must be a very simple matter now. It was different in my time."

CHAPTER X

TRIBAL ORGANISATION

IN turning now to the consideration generally of native communities as political organisms, before attempting to give any particular account of the physical, moral and intellectual attributes, the customs, rites, beliefs, etc., of Central African natives as they are to-day, I am influenced by the conviction that, between these communities and the more advanced systems with which we are familiar, there exists a relation more definite than most thinkers have cared to admit.¹ Students engaged in meditation concerning the perfect state, and somewhat dazzled perhaps by the greatness of their quest, have hitherto in truth paid scarcely any attention to rude and savage societies.

Writers on political science so distinguished as Locke, for example, and Hobbes, have assumed, or at any rate left it to be understood, in their contempt of the primitive, that mankind originally consisted of a mere aggregation of independent units, from which at some period or another

¹ The relation has, however, been recognised by some eminent philosophers—by Aristotle, for instance.

governments were called into existence, more or less abruptly, by conscious volition. Approaching the study of politics from the standpoint of pure speculation, and exercising themselves to determine what the ends of government ought to be, and what particular organisation will conduce most directly to the attainment of those ends, they naturally confine their inquiries to the states most adaptable to such theoretic treatment—that is to say, to highly-developed states—and disregard or overlook the connection which undoubtedly exists between the most advanced constitutions and the simplest constitution of all—that of the family. It is this connection, remote, yet nevertheless, I venture to say, distinct, which gives to tribal and village societies, lowly as they are, a strong and peculiar claim on our attention. In them we see the form most nearly allied to the family. In them we see the infancy of a prodigious force, the first faint yet certain movement of political evolution, working as an instinct, and destined so to work perhaps for many centuries before taking upon itself, as it has long since taken upon itself among us, the guise of deliberate contrivance to knit a hundred millions in its vast embrace.

Why should this idea of gradual progress and development be repugnant to the human mind? Why should we cling so obstinately to the much less intelligible theory of sudden creation? That such is the general bias it is impossible to doubt. The reluctance of political scientists to trace modern systems of government to their humble

origin in the tribe and in the family finds its counterpart in the attitude of those biological disputants who long repudiated, nay who still repudiate in the face of overwhelming proof, the physical tie between humanity and the lower animals. Of course this analogy must not be strained too far. Scepticism in regard to political evolution, although similar in kind to scepticism in regard to biology, is much less uncompromising, because biology is much older than history. Biology covers the ages and tells of the making of man. History deals only with the centuries and with what man himself has made. The point at which physical evolution resulted in the human body, as we know it, is so inconceivably distant, that those of us who have not given careful regard to the accumulated evidence on the subject may easily believe that this body was never otherwise than as it is now. But the evolution of the political body has been by comparison recent and rapid. Some highly important modifications in the science of government have been introduced within the memory of the living; and few Englishmen, at any rate, can read without enthusiasm and pride the annals of their own Constitution, wrought out so bravely and painfully to its noble end. Therefore none of us can wholly deny the principle of evolution in politics as some of us deny it in biology. But what I wish to establish is the fact that very few of us, on the other hand, are willing wholly to admit it. Is there then a precise limit to our recognition of this principle? I think so. I think that it is *the*

limit which divides government as a conscious contrivance from government by instinct.

Wherever in a political organism we see the signs of deliberate forethought, wherever we see it working as a machine devised by human ingenuity for a special end, we allow that organism to be worthy the name of government. We may condemn it, we may say that it is selfish and corrupt, that it is ill-constructed and ill-managed ; but still we take it more or less seriously into consideration as a definite political system and akin, as such, to all political systems, whether good or bad. But where conscious device is less palpable, where political restraint, instead of being imposed by arrangement, asserts itself as an instinct, where men live together in small and simple communities, subject to limitations the nature of which they scarcely comprehend, which have, so to say, grown up among them and have not been deliberately planned by any individual or party, there we point the finger of scorn, there we say is no real government or anything in which real government can have originated. Is it shame that turns men thus from the contemplation of their beginnings? If so, I confess to small sympathy with such a sentiment. The conception of slow and constant growth through travail to perfection, the sacrifice of many inferior types, the ultimate triumph of the fittest, seems to me not only, as I have said, more intelligible, but also more truly dignified than the presentation of a complete but disconnected result, brought about by some sudden strange force, by the will

of an individual perhaps, by a species of whim—built upon nothing, akin to nothing, *alone*. Truly and well has Seeley said of governments that, though they are machines, they are not merely machines. "They have their roots," he says, "in the instinctive, unconscious parts of human nature"¹—in the nature of wild man.

But, it may be said, all this merely amounts to an unestablished assertion. If actual relationship exists between primitive society and civilised society, wherein does it lie? Well, what are the ends of modern political organisation? We may differ in our opinions as to some of them. We may think, for example, that it is incumbent upon the State to profess and promote a certain form of religious faith, or, on the other hand, we may argue that religious faith is the concern of individuals and ought to be preserved from State interference. But regarding the first and greatest function of government all of us are agreed. We say that, before everything else, it must exert its power to uphold the weaker members of the community against the stronger members, and the community itself against any hostile community. The maintenance of justice, the defence of the common weal; these are the great watchwords of government. For this one purpose we lend it our united strength, for this we cheerfully sink our smaller differences, holding our private interests, and, if need be, our lives at its absolute disposal. However it may in other directions enlarge its province, whatever other functions it

¹ *Introduction to Political Science.*

may from time to time assume, the duty of protection remains its true *raison d'être* ; and, although we can call to mind many governments which have imperfectly fulfilled this duty, we can scarcely conceive of any government as daring to repudiate it. Now if this grand characteristic of civilised states were not also a characteristic of primitive communities, we might justly exclude the latter from consideration as political organisms at all. But so far from not being a characteristic of primitive communities, it is even more obvious in them than in civilised states ; because, while the latter recognise protection merely as the first duty among many, the latter recognise it as practically the sole duty,¹ which is equivalent to saying that primitive communities contain within themselves the germ and essence of modern government without its ramifications. This is all that I wish to establish ; and, if my readers admit it, they can no more despise the rude associations of wild men for not being mature organisms than they can despise children for not being grown up.

Let us then pass on to consider the actual stage of political development to which the people of Central Africa have attained. At the outset we are confronted by an important phenomenon—to wit, the circumstance that a powerful foreign

¹ It is true that the normal attitude of primitive communities towards each other is offensive as well as defensive, and that a good opportunity for attacking a neighbouring tribe is rarely allowed to pass. But here offensive action partakes largely of the nature of self-protection. A tribe that never attacked would not long continue to exist.

administration has recently established itself in their midst. This could scarcely fail to produce some notable effect. What effect has it produced, then, in the present instance, on the trend of native politics? It has, for the moment at least, completely arrested their progress along the natural line of development, and has actually forced them back into an earlier shape out of which they had already passed.

For the sake of clearness, let us henceforward apply to the first three stages of political evolution the terms in which I have referred to them once or twice before—namely, the family, the village community, and the tribal community. When Sir Harry Johnston's Administration was introduced into Nyasaland, the people of that country had passed through the first and second of these stages, and had fairly entered upon the third. The unit of their political organisation was no longer the family or the village community, but the tribe. Centralisation was necessarily imperfect in the tribe as being a larger body, and considerable authority was delegated by the chief to the village headmen under him; but still there was a very real coherence in the tribal organisation, the power of the chief was the supreme power, and in grave matters or in urgent crises he could make it felt in every part of his country. "The chief," says Duff Macdonald, "is called the owner of the territory (msiene chilambo) and has supreme power over every one that dwells in his dominions. It is true that he does not personally interfere with

all his subjects, much less with their slaves, but he holds the headmen accountable for the government of their respective villages. . . . In and around his own village the chief of the country is a terrible power, and his government is supported by the most prompt and severe punishments. But in distant parts of his dominions, where influential headmen live, he may be little known, though as a matter of theory he is supposed to settle all graver disputes, even in remote villages. When an appeal comes up from a headman's village, the chief generally decides it himself, though he may refer it either to this headman again, or to some other headman in whom he has confidence. . . . All his decisions are final. . . . In time of war each headman, when summoned, must follow his chief's flag, otherwise his village is burned down, and all that fail to escape are killed or enslaved."

Here we have a form of government which, although rude, is still perfectly definite and intelligible, and exhibits certain machinery substantially identical with that of much more advanced forms. But this government exists in Nyasaland no longer. The power of the tribal chiefs has been wrested from them by British supremacy. The tribes themselves have been broken up into village communities again. We still speak, it is true, of Malemia, for instance, and of Mpeseni as chiefs, and of the Wa-Yao and of the Angoni as tribes, but Malemia and Mpeseni are not really chiefs any longer, but only headmen under British control, with an authority

more or less nominal over inferior headmen in their vicinity ; and the Wa-Yao and the Angoni are, in a political sense, not tribes, but only the fragmentary material out of which the tribes were constructed, and into which they have been dissolved again. In fact, as I have said, British intervention has had the effect of checking the natural development of native politics, and of forcing them back from the third or tribal stage into the second stage—that of the village community—out of which they had already emerged.

Why did this happen ? How did it become necessary for us to shatter the fabric of native government so completely ? I put the question merely for the sake of preserving logical continuity. The answer is obvious. It was necessary to destroy the power of the tribes, because they were ready to use that power without scruple against each other and against ourselves. In so far as concerned its internal affairs, the settlement of disputes and the punishment of crime among its own subjects, tribal government, although ruthlessly severe, was in the main honest. Perhaps the chief or some of his influential headmen might occasionally make oppressive use of their authority for purposes of private aggrandisement ; but on the whole they were careful to see that justice was fairly administered, and that their subjects showed a proper respect for each other's rights. At this point, however, tribal government ceased to recognise any responsibility whatever. Fair play and good faith were terms which it considered only in relation to its own people. To

the outsider it held itself bound by nothing. The stranger in its eyes was the enemy, and the only duty which it recognised in his direction was that of attacking him whenever he seemed to be at a disadvantage.¹ The natural result of this was confusion as bloody and hopeless as general anarchy could have produced. Far preferable would have been the tyranny, however stern and absolute, of a single great tribe; but no single tribe was capable of establishing such a dominion, or could conceive of warfare except as a means to procure booty and slaves. Nowhere was there any rest or any security. The weaker peoples fled to the hills and to the marshes. The stronger retaliated upon their assailants. The half-bred Arabs raided the Wankonde, the Wa-Yao fell upon the Anyanja, the Angoni attacked the Ba Tumbuka, the Achewa, the Achipeta, the Ahenga, the Atonga, and, finally, the Wa-Yao themselves.

Upon such a scene in 1890 did the pioneers of the present British Administration arrive. They

¹ Some time after this was written I noticed with satisfaction that Darwin had laid emphasis on the same peculiar limitation of the moral sense in savages. He remarks in his *Descent of Man*, p. 117: "No tribe could hold together if murder, robbery, treachery, etc., were common; consequently such crimes within the limits of the same tribe are branded with everlasting infamy, but excite no such sentiments beyond these limits." And again on the same page he says, speaking of slavery not being considered as a crime among savages: "This was especially the case because the slaves belonged in general to a race different from that of their masters."

It is interesting to note that among the ancient Romans the word "hostis," now meaning "an enemy," signified "a traveller" or "a stranger."—Cicero says (*de Officiis*, I. 12): "Hostis apud majores nostros is dicebatur, quem nunc peregrinum dicimus."

came to fulfil a high programme of civil policy ; but it soon became evident—indeed it had been evident all along—that before any measures of civil policy could even be attempted, it would be necessary for them to make good their footing by the sword. They were aliens in the most complete sense of the term, having as little in common with one tribe as with another, and therefore in an equal degree objects of suspicion to all. Their humane ideas of government, their notions about international rights and duties, were incomprehensible to men accustomed to live by international rapine ; and, above everything, their slender numbers seemed to render it unlikely that they would be able to enforce any order of things to which the native population was opposed.

I have briefly traced in Chapter II. the course of events which followed. Everywhere the new-comers met with resistance. Had the development of local politics been a little more advanced, a strong federation might have confronted them. But this could not be. The tribe, as I have said, was the political unit of the country ; and between these units, traditionally hostile to each other, no coherence was possible. They took the offensive therefore individually, and individually they were crushed. The house, divided against itself, fell. Some of the tribal chiefs were slain in action, others were driven from their territories or imprisoned for a term of years. Those who remained became mere puppets in the hands of their conquerors, and the tribes

over which they had ruled resolved themselves into village communities once more.

It may perhaps be said that we had no right thus violently to interrupt the course of native affairs. Some people of strong and irregular sympathies, who are content to think loosely on great questions, profess this view towards Imperial enterprise generally, without stopping to inquire what it really means. "Africa," they say, for instance, "should be for the Africans. It is their country, not ours. They are the natural lords of the soil. They do not invite the presence of European adventurers, still less the interference of European Governments; and it is unworthy of great and civilised nations to put forth their irresistible strength against these poor wild men, who ask only to be left to the management of their own affairs and the sovereignty over their own hereditary dominions." The argument, as it stands, has undoubtedly a plausible sound. It puts us in the position of bullies, and the natives in the position of martyrs. Let us consider it, however, a little more closely. I do not pretend, of course, that we took charge of Nyasaland solely or even primarily for the benefit of the natives. Our first and most natural care was to protect the interests of the British settlers there — interests which, having been honestly and legitimately acquired, in the face of many difficulties and at a heavy cost of labour and life, were suddenly threatened both from without, and still more gravely by the predatory instincts of certain tribes within the country

itself. Yet it must not be supposed that the British Government, forced to assume direct control over Nyasaland in order to defend the rights of its own subjects, overlooked the new responsibilities which it thus incurred towards the aboriginal inhabitants. I use the term "responsibilities" in no vague or uncertain sense; for it is now generally recognised by dominant civilised races that their relation towards subject savage races must be regarded in the light of certain principles, which amount almost to an unwritten contract. On the one hand, the civilised power is to obtain for itself a footing in a new country, valuable perhaps as an outlet for surplus population, or on account of great natural resources, or as a military frontier, or for some different reason; on the other hand, the natives of the country thus taken over are to enjoy the benefits of a strong and humane government, and are to participate in all such advantages of modern civilisation as, from time to time, can safely be extended to them. This is a fair undertaking, designed for mutual benefit, and it is one which, although very recently introduced into Nyasaland, has already borne excellent fruit there. Whatever of peace, whatever of security and of enlightenment the natives now enjoy is due to their European rulers alone; nor can any sane person doubt what the consequences would be, were those rulers to withdraw from the country. Africa for the Africans is all very well, but to leave Central Africa to the Central Africans to-morrow would be to leave it to the slave-raider and the free-

booter, to plunge it, on the instant, into the confusion and bloodshed from which it has been rescued. "Well," say the extremely bigoted among the anti-Imperialists, "what of that? You talk of an unwritten contract. We deny your right to impose any contract by the strong hand upon a native population in its own territory. As we have worked out our own political salvation, so let other races work out theirs. The evils which you tell us exist among these tribes, the status of slavery and the prevalence of internal strife, are evils from which all peoples must suffer at some period of their history, evils with which in the form of serfdom and feudal warfare our own ancestors were familiar, and which, however we may now abhor them, are still nothing more or less than natural phenomena, inseparable from the early stages of political development, and likely to be removed in course of time by normal progress." In all this undoubtedly there is some truth, but to employ it as a serious argument against Imperial activity is absurd. For it amounts to saying that, because certain terrible defects will probably be removed within an indefinite number of centuries through the slow operation of a natural law, we, who by that law have achieved emancipation from similar defects, and who are therefore by our experience peculiarly qualified to guide the steps of others less advanced than ourselves, must stand aside and let those others falter and blunder, merely because they do not choose to solicit an intervention on our part, the object of which, as far as

concerns themselves, they are incapable of comprehending. Moreover, in the case of the Bantu negro, it is somewhat doubtful whether he would ever, by his unaided efforts, pass beyond a certain limit of moral or political development.¹ I do not assert positively that he is incapable of doing so. I merely say that I feel uncertain about it. Here and there, among individuals of negro blood, I have thought that I could detect great natural potentialities for good. But mixing with the mass of the people, wandering among their villages, coming into touch with their lives and ways, I have sometimes been tempted to think differently—tempted even to wonder whether in the hearts and brains of these lazy, squalid, incurious beings there could really exist any germ of future fitness at all, anything from which to evolve, even after many hundreds of years, some semblance of that high motive-spirit which urges the white races—the last infirmity and glory of their minds, the vehement, untamable desire to excel.

However that may be, I have now, let us hope, explained, as sufficiently as the limits of a brief essay permit, my reasons for looking upon native communities with a somewhat greater interest than has hitherto been vouchsafed to them either by professed students of politics or by the general public. I have tried to show that the difference between these communities and the civilised

¹ Archbishop Whately, in his *Lectures on Political Economy*, says there is no instance of savages emerging *unaided* from their savagery.

institutions with which we are familiar, though so wide that it may appear at first sight to be radical, is really one of degree, and that, while civilised systems are markedly distinguished from all primitive systems by superior breadth of province and by more delicate and complex machinery, the root-idea of both is the same.

CHAPTER XI

PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE NATIVES

THE native population of British Central Africa was reckoned a few years ago at 845,000, but this estimate is a very rough one and probably below the true figures. In 1901 I calculated the population of Zomba district to be some 25,000 (men, women and children), or nearly 25 to the square mile. The relative density of population, however, varies enormously; the courses of rivers and streams and desirable neighbourhoods generally being often crowded with huts, while, on the other hand, there are immense tracts of dry forest land on which hardly a single village exists. The distribution of the principal tribes is as follows:—In the extreme north we have the Wankonde. South of them, along the coast-line of the West Nyasa district, dwell the Atonga. Further inland, various clans of Angoni, intermixed as a dominant caste with inferior races (mostly of Batumbuka or Nyanja stock, such as the Wahenga, Achewa and Achipeta), inhabit the country lying between Lake Nyasa and North-Eastern Rhodesia. The Wa-Yao—who, like the Angoni, are not really indigenous to the country,

but entered it as invaders—are settled at the south end of the lake, and are also largely present throughout the Shiré districts, where they dispute the predominance of the aboriginal Anyanja. My own experience of Central African natives has been confined principally to those inhabiting the Shiré Highlands; and such remarks as I have to offer will therefore apply primarily to these tribes, although there is so much in common between the various Bantu septs that what is true of any one of them is often in a great measure true of all the others.

To begin then with physical characteristics, I think nobody coming to British Central Africa could fail to be struck with the robust bodily development of the natives generally. The Wa-Yao are beyond doubt the tallest and strongest race in the Shiré Highlands, and perhaps anywhere in the Protectorate, although I have seen some fine specimens among the Northern Angoni; but the average height of men over the whole country must be some 5 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 7 inches, while measurements of 6 feet and over are not at all uncommon.¹ The frame of the body is powerful, the neck short, the chest deep. Muscular development is almost invariably well marked. The colour of the skin is generally a good, rich brown, varying slightly, however, in depth of tone among the different tribes. Here and there one meets with individuals, notably among the Wa-Yao, who have skins of an

¹ I have measured natives 6 feet 4 inches and 6 feet 4½ inches in height.

unpleasant, sickly yellowish tint, but these are the exceptions. The palms of the hand and soles of the feet are always much paler in colour than the rest of the body. The facial type presents all the well-known negro characteristics—the dolicocephalic skull, the prominent brow, deep-set eyes with curling lashes, flat nose, spreading nostrils, and thick out-turned lips. These peculiarities, however, although present in all natives sufficiently to ensure a certain general uniformity of type, are much less pronounced in some than in others. Faces which display them in an extreme form naturally appear repulsive to Europeans, but in very many Central Africans they are so far modified as to be quite consistent with our ideas of what is actually handsome. The hair of the natives is true negro hair, harsh and woolly. It is rarely seen on the face, and when present there is generally of weak and irregular growth, while the fine fluffy down often seen on the bodies of Europeans is quite absent. Their teeth, although often filed into points or otherwise disfigured, are always remarkably white and strong. This is due principally no doubt to their simple diet, but they take uncommon care of their teeth too, constantly polishing them with sticks which they cut from a plant known as “nswachi.” The capacity for endurance among natives is very great. A “tenga-tenga,” or porter, literally thinks nothing of walking 30 miles or more between sunrise and sunset, with a load of 60 pounds on his head, and will, if necessary, continue to travel at a rate of from 20 to 25

miles per diem for weeks on end. Machilla carriers, being usually picked men, exhibit still greater strength and activity. Once, under pressure of emergency, my own team of sixteen Wa-Yao carried me fully 55 miles over bad, heavy roads in a single day (twelve hours), without uttering a complaint or showing any sign of distress; indeed they came in dancing and singing at the finish like a crowd of school-boys. Natives have great suppleness of limb, and are fond of posturing and clowning. They climb wonderfully well, using their toes freely to grasp any projection or unevenness. They are also good runners, though I doubt whether in this or any other regular athletic exercise they excel the ordinary healthy European. They are certainly his inferiors in what we should call feats of strength, such as lifting and throwing weights, etc.

All natives are able to do without food, or at any rate with very little food, for what we should consider a long time, and require nothing more than a few handfuls of maize at noon to sustain them through a hard day's work. Yet I do not consider that they bear actual hunger very well. They are accustomed to cram themselves with nourishment at a single meal (in the evening), instead of taking food in moderate quantities several times a day as we do; that is all. When once the pinch of real hunger begins to make itself felt among them, there is nothing of which they complain more bitterly, or which demoralises them so completely. Similarly nothing appeals to them like the idea of being able to procure

food easily and in large quantities. They will judge of the desirability of any particular place of residence rather according to the nature and extent of its food supply than by any other standard of comparison. If there be plenty of grain or meat there, well and good. If not, it is a place to be avoided at all hazards. What was it that most impressed the South African natives who were sent on a visit to London some years ago? Was it the multitude of buildings, the crowds of people, the abundant street traffic, the underground railways, the electric lights, the parks, the monuments? Not at all. It was the butchers' shops. They stood wistful and stupefied before them. Whole houses festooned with legs of mutton and ribs of beef! Earthly Paradises! As for the appetite of the negro, I am almost afraid to say what it can accomplish; but at any rate we have the authority of Livingstone and Oswell for the statement that a South African Kafir will eat, if he can get it, from twelve to fifteen pounds of solid flesh in a day! Central Africans are just as greedy, and, after a successful day's hunting, will gorge themselves on fallen game until they are literally almost unable to move. The difficulty, however, of obtaining anything like a regular supply of meat compels them to depend chiefly on a vegetarian diet. As for their habits with regard to drinking, I cannot agree with Duff Macdonald (accurate as are most of his statements) when he says that they voluntarily abstain from taking anything to drink until three or four o'clock in the afternoon. My own

experience of them is that they never pass a stream without dipping their gourds into it, whatever the time of day. Whether they can endure forced thirst for long periods I do not know, but Nyasaland is generally so well watered that I imagine they are rarely called upon to do so. The national alcoholic beverage is "pombey,"¹ a kind of beer, of which all natives are inordinately fond, and which figures very largely at their dances and festivals. As brewed by them, it is rather too thick for our taste ; but, when strained through a cloth, I have drunk it with relish. It is slightly acid, and decidedly refreshing.

The eyesight of the natives, although remarkably good, is not, I think, quite so superior to that of Europeans as it is often represented to be. Actual defects of vision are, it is true, much less common among them than among ourselves—in fact, I can recall very few cases of natives so afflicted ; but as far as concerns normal powers of sight, white men are probably nearly the equals of any Bantu people. A European hunter, as often as not, is quicker at marking game than are his black gun-bearers ; but this of course depends rather on a certain readiness and knack than on any particular strength of sight. The native sense of hearing again is very acute ; but, on the other hand, smell, touch and taste are probably less so than among civilised races. The *timbre* of the voice among the Central Africans is usually good—deep and strong in the men, very melodious

¹ Manufactured both from maize and millet.

and sweet in the women. One notable peculiarity about these people is the loud key in which they always carry on conversation. The ordinary quiet tones of European speech are scarcely ever heard among them. They literally shout; and such being their habit, it is a matter of indifference to them whether the person to whom they are speaking is close by or twenty yards away. For example, they will walk along a road, in single file, at intervals which would absolutely preclude any sustained conversation whatever between white men, and will nevertheless continue to exchange remarks, jokes and stories the whole time, without making any attempt to come together for the purpose. In the same way one may see them in their villages, squatting in front of their several huts and cheerfully roaring at each other across the intervening spaces. They are indeed most tireless chatterers. I doubt whether any other people in the world talk so much or laugh so much. Their laughter is particularly healthy, natural and unrestrained—a most exhilarating sound.

Nervous susceptibility among the natives is very small, and their recuperative power correspondingly pronounced, which enables them to bear pain with stoical fortitude and to recover from injuries which would be certainly fatal to most Europeans. The truth is, I suppose, that the principle of the survival of the fittest still works, among these simple people, mainly in the direction of physical development. It is a mere truism that the same principle among ourselves

has been so far diverted from this, its original sphere, as to operate in some ways with positively injurious effect upon the mere body. Of course this argument can easily be strained too far, but still there is no doubt that the conditions under which the modern "struggle for existence" is carried on do, to a great extent, stimulate the mental at the expense of the physical faculties, and that the extremes of luxury and privation which are met with in civilised communities, and nowhere else, do tend to produce among white men certain nervous weaknesses from which savages, otherwise not much if at all their physical superiors, are totally exempt. This singular callousness, combined with their generally excellent constitutions, renders natives, as might have been expected, very satisfactory surgical patients. It would indeed be easy to multiply instances of marvellous recovery on the part of both men and women from injuries of the most frightful description, such as those resulting from the attacks of wild beasts or from accidents, or from the barbarous punishments awarded until recently by native tribunals. I have heard of a machilla carrier who, having had an arm amputated at the shoulder, was with difficulty prevented from resuming his work on the very next day after the operation; and one of my own servants (a police orderly), without any medical assistance at all, except such as I could give myself in the absence of a qualified doctor, recovered within a few days from a most horrible mauling inflicted upon him by a leopard—a mauling which I am convinced

no white man could possibly have survived.¹ But perhaps the most wonderful example of vitality on record is that quoted by Wood, and again by Duff Macdonald, where a negro fell under a waggon loaded with *two tons of firewood*, one of the fore-wheels of the vehicle passing completely over his neck, in spite of which he retained his presence of mind sufficiently to roll out of the way of the hind-wheels. On being questioned as to whether he was not hurt, he merely complained that some pebbles had been crushed into his flesh, and naïvely requested one of the bystanders to remove them!

Ordinary illnesses natives do not bear nearly so well; and when once they have made up their minds that they are going to die, nothing will keep them alive.² They suffer to a certain extent from pneumonia and similar affections, which is not very surprising when we consider their scanty clothing and the manner in which they are often exposed to the weather, especially during the rainy season. Venereal diseases are prevalent among them, and are growing more so every year. They are also liable to common malaria, but, on the other hand, are practically exempt from Blackwater Fever. Small-pox is a more or less familiar scourge in all native villages. Inasmuch as natives have absolutely no idea of even the most ordinary sanitary

¹ Three men in all were worried by this same leopard. One of them died; the other two recovered.

² Asiatics are even worse in this respect, as I had occasion to notice in India during the plague and famine of 1897.

precautions, their habits of life are such as to give every encouragement to the spread of contagious disease. In 1900-1901 there was a sporadic outbreak, nearly all over the Protectorate, of a very virulent type of small-pox. As a civil magistrate I was naturally required to assist the medical officers, as far as I could, by trying to gain the confidence of the natives in my district, and by marking out segregation camps, placing police patrols, and arranging for compensation to those whose infected huts, clothing and utensils had been destroyed. I speak therefore from experience when I say that no work could be more difficult and wearisome than that of trying to combat such an epidemic. It is in vain, in a case of this kind, to put the slightest reliance on the natives themselves, to expect even passive obedience from them, much less active and intelligent co-operation. It is true that they do not seem to have any objection to being vaccinated—indeed thousands submitted themselves voluntarily for this purpose; but to keep the diseased and the healthy apart from each other, to prevent them from using the same water supply, to make them observe any fixed rules whatever, is well-nigh hopeless. Taken for all in all, however, they are beyond doubt a most healthy and hardy people. I have mentioned a few maladies to which they are more or less subject; but then there are a host of others, only too familiar to us, from which they are almost entirely free, particularly minor ailments, of which headache seems to be the only one commonly

known to them. Their remedy for this is to bind a cord tightly round the brows. I believe that they have their own reputed cures for nearly every disease, but the element of faith probably enters very largely into their method of treatment.

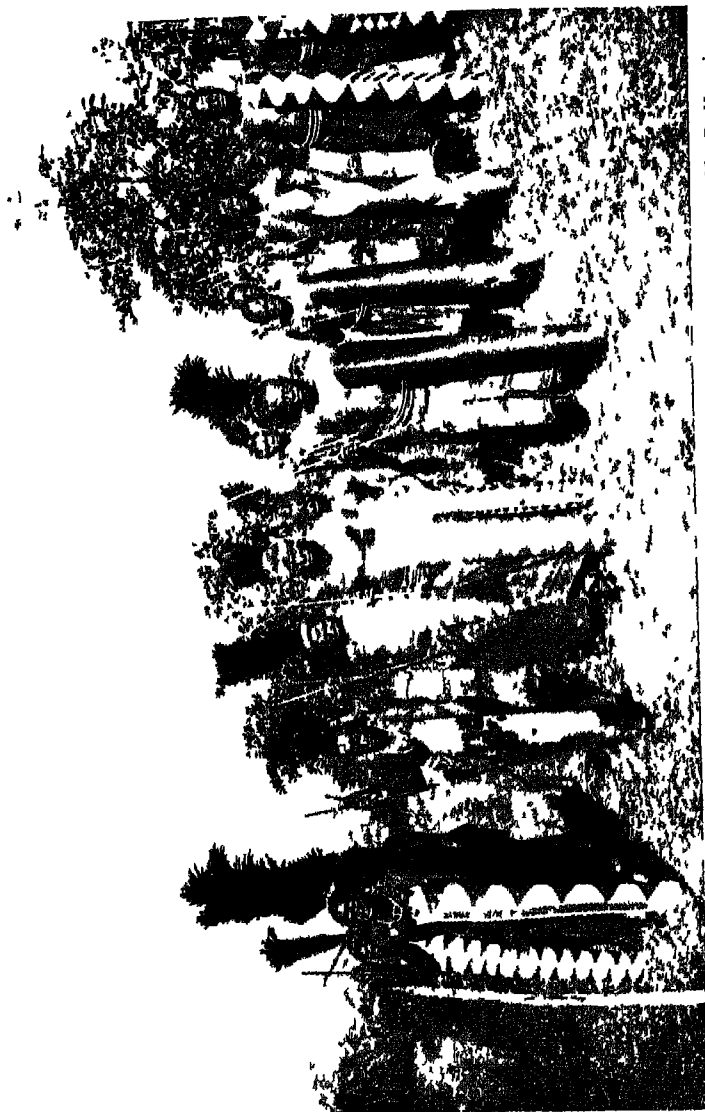
In the matter of cleanliness there is a great difference between the various tribes, a close relation existing in this respect between their general position in the scale of intellectual, moral and even physical development and their personal habits. Thus the Wa-Yao of the Shiré Highlands, the Angoni proper of Mombera's country, and the Atonga of West Nyasa, perhaps the three finest native races in the Protectorate, are also among the most regular in their ablutions.¹ The Anyanja are less so, while the dirtiest people of all are the bestial Anguru of Lake Chilwa, and the inferior races of Central Angoniland, the slaves and dependents of the true Angoni, such as the Batumbuka, Ajawa, Achewa, Achipeta and others who come down from their homes to work as carriers or otherwise in the Shiré districts. The bodies of these men are often so encrusted with accumulated layers of clay, mud and filth of all kinds, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the natural hue of their skins, while the stench which they exhale is almost intolerable.² Fortu-

¹ The Atonga in particular spend a great deal of time in the water, and are most excellent swimmers and divers.

² A peculiarly offensive smell is common to all negroes, although frequent ablutions may almost entirely subdue it. Sir Harry Johnston thinks that this odour proceeds from a particular secretion distinct from ordinary sweat. However that may be, it certainly accompanies sweat, and is induced by the same causes—exertion and heat.

nately these savages wear next to no clothing. If they did, they would be scarcely approachable by Europeans.

Personally I think that it is the greatest mistake to encourage any of the natives to wear superfluous garments, and above all articles of European attire, not only on the account just mentioned, but also because of its deplorable effect from the point of view of æsthetics, and still more because it undoubtedly tends to impair their natural hardiness and to render them liable to a multitude of ailments from which in their unclothed state they are enviably free. The Wa-Yao are particularly fond of dress, and in the neighbourhood of places like Zomba and Blantyre many of them may be seen, parading the roads, most absurdly and hideously clad in the cast-off wardrobes of their masters. The missionaries are especially to blame in this connection, for it seems to be a *sine quâ non* that their native assistants, teachers and deacons shall wear coats and trousers, frequently even hats, and shall carry badly-rolled umbrellas in their hands. To me, I confess, the sight of a negro thus arrayed is an abomination. In his natural state, with bare, bronzed neck, and chest and limbs, his waist and perhaps his shoulders lightly draped in a few yards of calico, the average native of good caste is a striking and picturesque figure. But gird him with such a travesty of civilised habiliments as I have described, and he loses at once all dignity of mien, all freedom of movement, all harmony with his surroundings. However, the habit



Mr. R. H. Sullivan,

WANKONDE OF NORTH NYASA.

Photo

of wearing incongruous and unnecessary European garments is fortunately not yet widely spread in Central Africa, partly no doubt because it is difficult for the natives in general to procure such things.

The ordinary dress of the men is a strip of cloth reaching from the waist to the knees. Dressed bark was formerly used for this purpose, but has now been almost entirely superseded by the cheap calico sold at various trading stations. Some of the Yao men, especially chiefs and other notables, affect more voluminous draperies, and sometimes discard loose wrappings altogether in favour of the long, white Arab robe called "kanzu." The Yao women generally cover the upper part of the body as far as the division between the breasts, which, as in most native women of what tribe soever, are tightly strapped down, either by the natural folds of the dress alone or by a piece of string. Many of the young girls have exceedingly neat and graceful figures, but the practice to which I have referred, combined with the effects of giving suck, soon destroys their symmetry and produces the long pendent mammæ so characteristic of Central African females. In some cases the breasts become elongated to such an extent that they can be passed under the armpits, and it is no uncommon thing to see a mother suckling her child in this way as it lies on her back.

The Wankonde of North Nyasa, so far as I know, are the only people in the Protectorate who go absolutely nude; and I hear that even they are beginning to affect a little clothing in the

neighbourhood of Karonga, where the principal European station of the North End is situated. Some of the inferior Anyanja tribes of Central Angoniland, however—the same whose personal dirtiness I have mentioned already—wear nothing but an apron of cloth or goatskin about twelve inches square. The feet are never covered. Even those few natives who have adopted European clothing in other respects seem to eschew boots and shoes. The head also is almost invariably unprotected, although a piece of calico may sometimes be twisted round the brows, turban fashion. The hair is shaved after an infinite variety of patterns, extreme care being devoted to this operation. Some men scrape their skulls bare except for a narrow ridge, running upwards from the nape of the neck, like the crest of a Roman helmet. Others again wear a frizzled bush over the forehead or in the centre of the crown, or divide the hair into regular geometrical figures, or remove the whole of it. The women do not ordinarily shave their heads at all, nor have I seen among the natives of the Protectorate any such elaborate artificial dressing of the hair as is practised, for instance, by the Mashukulombwe.¹

Tattooing is almost universally practised by both sexes. It is, however, very roughly done,

¹ The Mashukulombwe inhabit the country lying north of Tete on the Zambesi. Their head-dress is very peculiar, and consists of a long finely-tapered cone, rising upwards and forwards from the back of the cranium. How far the genuine hair enters into the composition of this structure I am unable to say.

and is altogether inferior to the tattooing of the Maoris of New Zealand and other Pacific races. I have indeed never seen on the body of a Central African anything like an intricate or artistic device. Their tattooing consists merely of a few cicatrices, usually on the face, chest, stomach, and buttocks, but varying somewhat in position and design among the different tribes. The method of operation is simply to make a slit in the skin, and then to rub in charcoal, a quill or a splinter of wood being inserted in order to prevent the wound from closing and to form a raised scar. The Anguru of Lake Chilwa have a rather odd tribal mark, resembling the fleur-de-lis. The Makua, who come from the same part of the country, entirely cover their foreheads with deep perpendicular gashes, set close together and running almost from temple to temple. The tribal marks of the Wa-Yao are also on the forehead, but are far less disfiguring than those of the Makua.

Personal ornaments are much favoured, especially by the women, who generally display several necklaces of beads as well as bracelets and anklets. The latter are nearly always of metal (iron or brass wire), often very massive, and are sometimes worn in such numbers as to encircle the leg from the foot to half-way up the shin. Bracelets may be either of metal or ivory, the latter being often seen on the wrists of the men, who also occasionally wear plain finger-rings. The women, in addition to their necklaces, have strings of beads round the waist ; while some of

the Wankonde women of North Nyasa, who are otherwise nude, provide themselves with small bead aprons very prettily worked in different patterns and colours. Among the less pleasing feminine ornaments must be reckoned the nose-buttons of the Wa-Yao, and the frightful "pelele" or lip-ring of the Anyanja. The nose-button is a circular disc of ivory or burnished lead, let into the side of the nostril. Ugly as is the effect produced by this, it is yet a thousand times less hideous than the pelele, which consists of a round flat piece of bone, ivory, or wood, fixed into a slit in the upper lip. This slit is gradually increased by the insertion of successive plugs, each a little larger than the preceding one, until it can accommodate a full-sized pelele, which sticks out an inch or more in front of the face, rendering the appearance of the wearer scarcely human. A few years ago this barbarous fashion was universal among the Anyanja, but it is now falling rapidly into disfavour; indeed a pelele is hardly ever seen except among the old women, to whose withered and wrinkled countenances it lends a perfectly diabolical expression. It is difficult for a European to believe that even the natives themselves can really admire the lip-ring; and yet they certainly do, or rather did.¹ I have often

¹ I was much amused to read in one of Sir Samuel Baker's books (I forget which) how a dusky chieftainess once suggested to him that the appearance of Lady Baker, who was travelling with her husband at the time, would be much improved if he would only knock out a few of her front teeth and put a stone in her upper lip! Of course the standard by which different races judge of beauty is notoriously arbitrary. I often tried to ascertain from the Central Africans how we impressed them in



A YAO PORTER EXHIBIT BANTU TYPE



AN OLD ANYA'JA WOMAN, SHOWING THE PELELE OR IIP RING
From sketches by the Author.

thought that the familiar French proverb which says, "*Il faut souffrir pour être belle*," and which we are accustomed to quote in connection with the fashionable extravagance of civilised society, is really much more strictly applicable to savages. No civilised "mode" ever entailed upon its votaries such pain and inconvenience as does the pebele; and if to this we add some of the other practices to which I have referred—the strapping of the bosom with tight cords, piercing of the nose, severe tattooing, loading of the feet and arms with pounds of brass and iron, filing and punching of the teeth—then we must admit that native women endure more for the sake of appearances than any of the high-heeled, tight-laced beauties of Paris and New York.

Before concluding these brief notes on the physical characteristics and habits of the Central Africans, there is one point to which I wish to draw special attention in connection with African negroes generally, and that is their remarkable and (so far as I know) unique power of maintain-

this respect. Whenever I put the question to a man who lived near a European centre, or who had come much into contact with Europeans, the reply was more or less complimentary to us. It is possible that in such a case the taste of the native may really alter through intercourse with his white rulers, though even here I am inclined to think that the answers received were more polite than truthful. As for the wilder aborigines, those from whom I succeeded in coaxing any statement of opinion at all were unanimous in confessing that they thought us very ugly, and, on being pressed for particulars, said that they disliked our pale skins, prominent noses, and blue eyes. One of them made a curious remark to the effect that blue eyes were "fierce, like a leopard's" (*ukali mozi mozi nyalugwi*).

ing their breed numerically against the various influences hostile to native races which attend European immigration. By the word immigration is meant here the influx of white settlers on a considerable scale and their permanent establishment in the country by a succession of generations, not the mere coming and going of individual members of the ruling caste. India affords a typical example of the latter state of things. We hold India, we develop its resources, we administer its government, but we have never in a regular sense colonised it. Such colonisation would indeed be impossible. The marvellous adaptability of civilised peoples to surroundings the most extremely different has often been remarked, but then it is only the mature man who can thus adapt himself. His young progeny cannot. In a torrid climate English infants either die or grow up delicate, and even their parents lead a more or less artificial existence, mitigating discomforts by every device that experience can suggest or mechanical ingenuity can carry into execution. In such a country Europeans are mere birds of passage. Their lives, though often pleasant enough, are unsettled; their hopes are fixed elsewhere. The aim of each is to make enough money to enable him to go home; and, if he marries before that end is achieved, he is compelled to send his children away almost as soon as they are born. Now where this is the condition of affairs, the indigenous races, far from tending towards extinction, flourish exceedingly, and maintain their fecundity at its normal or even

at an increasing level. In the absence of any books of reference on the subject, I can give no actual statistics of population; but I fancy the rule will be found to hold good not merely in India, but in Burmah, Siam, Cochin China, all parts of tropical Africa, and wherever else white men occupy an analogous position. If, however, we turn to North America, to Canada, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, we find them in a very different case. The European population of those regions is no mere aggregation of fluctuating units, but a stable body. The settlers are really settlers. They make homes there for themselves and their families. Fathers are succeeded in the same business on the same ranch or farm by sons born and bred in the state or colony. Inter-marriages are contracted, permanent ties are formed, permanent interests are acquired; the sense of close connection with the Mother Country is lost, and there comes into existence a new white race with traits peculiar to itself, traits which distinguish it equally from the parent stock and from all other offshoots of that stock. When this happens, the almost invariable rule is that the indigenous tribes, among whom such settlements have been formed, decay and gradually perish entirely. This has been the case in all parts of the world which I have mentioned in this connection. The Australian blacks and the aborigines have already practically disappeared. The Red Indians and the Maoris are verging fast in the same direction, and would undoubtedly have become extinct before now, but that those

who still survive are protected, just as rare wild animals are protected, by special acts of legislation. To this rule there is, to the best of my belief, only one striking exception, and it is furnished by the Bantu negroes of South Africa. Their country in its greater extent is admirably suited to the requirements of Europeans, who live and breed there just as they do in other healthy colonies, and the influences which have so disastrously affected the natives of those other colonies have been unsparingly exercised in South Africa.

Let us consider for a moment how the extinction of indigenous races is accounted for by those who have given attention to the subject. Various writers have put forward the profligacy of the women, wars, the introduction of alcohol, and new forms of disease as an explanation. Fenton¹ says that the Maoris themselves attribute their decay to changed food, drink, and general habits. Darwin, who quotes Fenton, also considers this to be the most probable reason, and remarks²: "Although these changes appear inconsiderable, I can well believe, from what is known with respect to animals, that they might suffice to lessen the fertility of natives." Now all these changes, and most of them in a marked degree, have been brought to bear on the tribes of South Africa. They were engaged for many years after the arrival of the first European settlers in con-

¹ *Observations on the Aboriginal Inhabitants of New Zealand*. Published by Government.

² *Descent of Man*, p. 187.

stant and bloody hostilities, particularly with the Dutch, at whose hands they suffered most cruelly; and since that time they have been absorbed into the cities, farms, and goldfields of their conquerors. Measures, it is true, have been taken to preserve them from certain dangers—from alcohol, for instance; but we know that the same measures have been tried and have failed of their purpose elsewhere; and, even if we allow that regulations of this kind have been more strictly enforced in South Africa than in other parts of the world, it is impossible to think that the general conditions of life have not changed for the natives of Cape Colony, Natal, and the Transvaal at least as completely as for the Maoris and the Red Indians. How then have they escaped the fate of the Maoris and the Red Indians? Why is it that instead of decreasing, they still multiply and thrive? The only answer seems to be that they must have in them some sort of adaptability, some power of resistance to changes in their environment which other savage races have not. The point seems to me of great importance, because it is only among such races that the influences of Western civilisation find a perfectly free field of action. Elsewhere we must select, alter, demolish, reconstruct. Ancient beliefs, ancient prejudices bar the way to reform. The strength of time, the strength of faith, the strength of intellect is arrayed against us. Complex false systems of policy devised by brains not less keen than our own, complex false systems of religion and morals sunk for ages in

hearts not less tenacious of creed than our own, must be combated and destroyed. Even by the visible work of their hands we know them. In the temples of their gods, in the tombs of their dead, in the palaces of their kings we may read the nature and extent of those old, beautiful, corrupt civilisations, whose diverse aspects are at once our admiration and despair.

But the savage is very differently situated. He has no links with the past. In a certain sense he may truly be said to have no past. He has evolved for himself nothing lasting, nothing elaborate in any domain. His ideas are vague and formless. His nature is as plastic and impressionable as a child's—a blank sheet whereon we may write as we will, without the necessity of first deleting old impressions. Yet with the single great exception of the Bantu peoples, who on that account, if on no other, should I think have a strong claim on our interest and attention, the poor savage, it seems, cannot endure intimate contact with us. Drawn from congenial gloom, he withers under the light of civilisation, as a mummy taken from the cavern where it has lain for centuries crumbles to dust under the light of day. Before we can do anything with him he has gone from among us, eluding the problem of his future development by the simplest of all expedients. Thenceforward the world of action and passion knows him no more. Only the scientific searcher, fingering his exhumed bones long after, will speculate as to who he was and how he lived, unless haply some poet, musing on

the seeming inconsistency of things, shall seek to point a moral by his fate.

"So careful of the type? but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone.
I care for nothing, all shall go.'"

CHAPTER XII

MORAL QUALITIES OF THE NATIVES

TURNING now to the moral character of the natives, I am conscious, as every one who has made a similar attempt must be, of the extreme difficulty of conveying any just idea of it to those who have never come into contact with aboriginal savages. I have lived among the people of Central Africa for five years, and have mixed with them more intimately perhaps than most white men, since it has been my profession to administer the affairs of some forty thousand of them, to hear their complaints, redress their grievances, and punish their offences. Yet to-day I feel less positive as to their ultimate capabilities, less ready to pronounce a decided judgment upon them, than I did when I had been only six months in the country. There is a general impression in some quarters that the savage is a simple being; and simple no doubt he is, in so far that his needs are limited, and that his actions in general are dictated by fewer and more clearly defined influences than those which govern the lives of civilised men and women. But simple, in the sense of being easily

understood, he certainly is not. It is, in fact, the merest truism that scarcely one European in a hundred, whatever his experience of natives, arrives at a full comprehension of the workings of their hearts and minds. It may be that the tide of progress has carried us so far in advance of our humbler fellows that we have altogether lost touch with primitive human nature; it may be that the moral and intellectual gulf between north and south is as impassable as Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells us it is between East and West.¹ At any rate there are certain things in the nature of the savage as he exists in Central Africa to-day which I cannot fully explain. I can only recount his curiously mixed qualities, and leave my readers to form their own impressions.

Untruthful by instinct and full of deceit, greedy yet generous, a coward in some situations, a remarkably brave man in others, sociable, friendly, with strong domestic affections, incredibly lazy by temperament, yet, when there is no help for it, wonderfully patient of toil, impulsive, quick to be moved and quick to forget, gross in his pleasures, indifferent to pain rather than maliciously cruel, singularly buoyant of heart, perfectly contented among surroundings the most squalid, careless of the future, seeking only to satisfy the barest material needs, perplexed by no theories, vexed by no aspirations, he lives almost as wild animals live, and dying leaves like them no trace of his existence behind. In all this it may be

¹ "East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet."

said there is small praise, and yet the *tout ensemble* of these various traits is far from being unpleasing, especially on a first acquaintance.

The most salient features of the native character—the features which nobody can help remarking at the very outset—are its extreme, almost childish friendliness and gaiety; and thus it is that travellers who merely pass through the country for their own amusement, or who spend at most a few months in it, nearly always speak well of the people. Those who have known them longer, and have had official or business relations with them, are less complimentary in their verdict; and yet I would not say that the latter are necessarily right, for it is precisely when we come to deal with the savage from an official or business standpoint that we are apt to lose our sense of proportion and demand too much of him. Were it possible to look on the native as a beast, or at any rate as a being radically different from and inferior to ourselves, as a creature incapable of progress, we should probably regard him with much less irritation and dissatisfaction than we often do at present. We should say in effect as we might say of a horse or a bullock—"This animal has some failings natural to its kind which it cannot help, which nothing will ever eradicate, and which therefore we must put up with. On the other hand, it has some excellent qualities, and on the whole it is a good animal." But the lowest native cannot be put on quite such a footing as this. However nearly in his present condition he may approximate to a beast, we know that he

is not really a beast at all, but a human being ; and accordingly we expect from him almost unconsciously human attributes, some of which it may yet take centuries to develop in his breast. I am sure that this too exacting attitude is at the bottom of almost all the difficulties which we experience in our intercourse with natives. The phrase, "A man and a brother," so often and so strenuously quoted in connection with the relations between European and native races, has been taken far too literally as regards the actual moral and intellectual status of the latter. We may grant—indeed until the contrary is proved we ought in fairness to grant—that the Central African negro may be the brother of the white man *in posse* ; but that he is our brother *in esse* I absolutely deny ; and to start with such an assumption in our dealings with him is simply to court misunderstanding and failure. Better, like the hero of *Locksley Hall*—

"Count the grey barbarian lower than the Christian child."

For how in truth should it be otherwise ? Let us remember how very recently Central Africa has been brought into even partial contact with civilisation. Less than half the span of a human life separates her from the period of her utter unregeneracy. Not five-and-thirty years have passed since the brave and gentle heart of Livingstone was buried at Old Chitambo, among tribes who, before his advent, had never looked upon the face of a white man or heard the sound of European speech. One generation of those

tribes succeeding another built its huts exactly as they were built in the old days, and bred, and did battle, and hunted, and tilled, counting its years by the maize harvests and its months by the changing moons until the term of its existence closed, unrecorded by any improvement in racial character, by any permanent mark upon the face of earth.

Such as Central Africa was then, it is in its greater extent now, and must for generations continue to be. "What," says Professor Russel Wallace,¹ "is there in the life of the savage but the satisfying of the cravings of appetite in the simplest and easiest way? What thoughts, ideas, or actions are there that raise him many grades above the elephant or the ape? . . . Such races as the Andaman Islanders, the Australians and the Tasmanians, the Digger Indians of North America, or the natives of Fuegia, pass their lives *so as to require few faculties not possessed in an equal degree by many animals.*" The italics are my own, for I wish to lay stress upon the fact, incredible and repugnant as it may appear to untravelled philanthropists, that for the most part the Central African negro of to-day, equally with the races mentioned by Professor Wallace, is not very markedly distinguished from the higher orders of beasts by any quality of the heart or brain, and that the only sensible way to deal with him is to expect from him at present little more than might be expected from an intelligent animal, having regard, however, to this vital difference,

¹ *Natural Selection and Tropical Nature*, pp. 192, 193.

that while the animal is incapable of further improvement, the savage probably has within him some latent germ of human excellence, the development of which depends largely upon the treatment which he receives from us. To condemn him, on the one hand, as a hopeless brute because his present nature is brutish, because he shows no desire for advancement or because his moral and æsthetic faculties are defective, is as unjust and impolitic as it is, on the other hand, to "give him his head," to let him act for himself in matters which he is incapable of comprehending, or generally to admit him, before his time, to any of those rights and powers which should be reserved to civilised and dominant castes.

Let us now consider separately some of the various traits which I have already roughly catalogued. The frank and impulsive gaiety of the Central Africans is, I think, just what we might expect to find in people situated as they are, inhabitants of sunny and fertile lands where food is easily procured, and where no season is marked by any particular climatic rigour. Again, the very uncertainty of their lives, until quite recently—the chances, I mean, of being raided and killed, or sold into slavery at any time—seems to have contributed to develop in them that reckless disregard of the future, that strong joyous concentration on the present which, all the world over, distinguish men who "dwell in the midst of alarms." At any rate, to whatever causes due, the cheerfulness of the Central African is his most striking as it is also his most pleasing

characteristic, and with it he possesses many of the virtues which naturally associate themselves with such a temperament. Hospitality is one of these, and is exhibited in a marked degree by all Central African natives. Both men and women may constantly be seen sharing their maize or cassava with others who have no food. If a delicacy, such as a cigarette, be given to any one man, he will pass it on to each of his companions in succession, and in the same way practically everything that they have is enjoyed more or less in common. The reception which natives accord to travelling Europeans is singularly hearty and charming, and is extended without stint to all the members of that European's retinue, who are at once received into the village circle, supplied with beer and corn, and given quarters for the night. To the European himself the chief of the village will always present a goat or a sheep, a few fowls or a basket of bananas; and if the illustrious stranger has no tent, then the best hut available is forthwith placed at his disposal. No doubt in a case of this kind the native casts his bread upon the waters with the assurance of finding it again, for he knows that his gifts are really *ἄδωρα δῶρα*—no gifts at all, since they are sure to be well paid for; while in addition to this, he is not without a lively hope of favours to come in the shape of assistance and protection at the hands of his all-powerful guest. Yet even as I write, I feel conscious of doing something analogous to looking a gift-horse in the mouth. Recollections crowd into my mind of a hundred

pleasant camps, pitched under the deep shade of banana-groves or rustling fields of maize. I recall the capacious smile of the village headman as he offers his humble "prize."¹ I hear again the friendly chatter and laughter of his people as they mingle with mine, the sound of the creaking rope and flapping canvas as my tent is set up by willing hands. I see again the low, thatched huts, the pigeons strutting and pecking, the sturdy figures of the women pounding meal for their guests, the wee naked children playing in the dust and about all the circle of the camp-fires, showing like so many points of warmth and welcome in the dense darkness of the tropic night. Memories like these are among the happiest that the wanderer retains, and it seems almost invidious to associate them with criticism of the motives underlying hospitality so warmly extended. But the truth is that native hospitality is more or less a system of give and take all round. I have seen cases certainly in which the giver could not reasonably expect to receive any return for his favours ; yet, generally speaking, the conditions of life among these people are such that to make many friends is their best policy. Again, negroes are so constituted that "the more the merrier" is a governing principle with them. A stranger is nearly certain to be able to give them news or to contribute in some way to their amusement, and he is readily admitted to a share of food and shelter, even though no further advantage is likely to accrue from his presence.

¹ "Prize" : a word constantly used by natives to signify a gift.

The domestic affections of the natives seem to be centred principally upon their young children, for whom they often cherish a strong and tender love. It is possible to travel a good deal among them without noticing this, because, generally speaking, it is not manifested by any particular outward demonstration. I have rarely seen negro fathers and mothers caress their children or play with them as Europeans might do. Yet they are exceedingly solicitous to provide for the needs of their little ones, and the death of a baby is always sincerely mourned. The only instance that I can remember of a native being moved to genuine tears by the sufferings of another than himself was when one of my civil police—an Atonga—came to my house at Nkata Bay about midnight, to tell me that his small son was dying. Under ordinary circumstances the man would never have dared to disturb me at so late an hour, but his anxiety made him reckless. I went over at once to the police lines, and found that the child had accidentally rolled into the fire and had sustained shocking injuries, which even my unprofessional eye could see must assuredly be fatal. Nothing could have been more wistful than the man's expression as he looked into my face, to find out whether any help was to be expected; and when I told him that here not even the white man's medicine could avail, and that his child must die, he gave way to grief as deep and real as any I have ever witnessed. It was quite different from the noisy and purely ceremonious lamentations with which most savage peoples

bewail the advent of death. So far from forcing the expression of sorrow, this man did his best to check it in my presence; and it was only when he attempted to speak that his self-control broke down and tears began to flow from his eyes. Apart from parental affection, which, it is worth while to remark, does not follow the child into adult life, or at any rate not in a marked form,¹ natives have a certain idea of filial and fraternal duty—something in the nature of the Latin *pietas*; but this is a wholly different and very much less intense and personal feeling with them than is their attachment to their young.

Conjugal love, as distinct from mere sexual passion, is probably the least strong of all their domestic affections; in fact, I have never seen among them the least sign of anything even remotely approaching such love as we understand it. The position occupied by the savage wife renders such a thing impossible. Even in civilised communities the evolution of woman as a rational creature is, if I dare say so, of comparatively recent date. In primitive communities her whole life is so rigidly prescribed by degrading conventions, her duties are so arduous and so menial, she is regarded and regards herself so entirely as the chattel of her lord and master, to whom native law gave almost the same rights over her as over his cattle and sheep, that anything in the nature of real companionship between them is out of the question. The moral

¹ In this, as in almost everything else, the affinity between savages and the lower animals is perceptible.

and intellectual gulf which separates savage men from their womankind is often indeed far greater than people imagine. Books of travel, in dealing with the development of native races, treat women more or less as a negligible quantity. When they mention any particular tribe as showing such and such a degree of intelligence, or having such and such emotions and perceptions, it is to the men primarily or exclusively that their remarks apply. The females are creatures apart, and between a native chief of good caste and the women of his household there is sometimes a difference nearly as great as that which exists between these women and the lower animals.¹ Yet in their way the Central African women are happy enough, and are as a rule tolerably well treated by their husbands—much better at any rate than the wives of hard-drinking labourers and artisans in England. Very few cases of downright brutality to women were brought before me during my residence in the Protectorate, and only one case of wife-murder, which was due to almost intolerable provocation. Generally speaking, indeed, the savage, although constantly held up

¹ It is, however, worthy of remark that actual comparison between the cranial cavities of the sexes in civilised and savage races seems to indicate that the difference in favour of the male tends to increase with general progress instead of diminishing, and that among primitive tribes the woman more nearly approaches to the intellectual level of the man than she does among modern Europeans. Darwin inclines to this belief, and cites Vogt and others in support of it (*Descent of Man*, p. 566). I can only repeat that, so far as the Central Africans are concerned, my experience of them has led me to exactly the opposite conclusion.

to execration for his cruelty, is far less wanton and senseless therein than the depraved white. The latter is brutal for no other reason than because he loves to be so; and those who suffer the worst things at his hands are more often than not his dependents, the members of his family household, the very persons whose natural protector he should be. The former is fearfully ruthless towards his enemies, towards aliens, towards those who have done him wrong; and the immemorial practice of cruelty in the direction of this class has made him perhaps more utterly callous to the spectacle of suffering, more impervious to subsequent feelings of remorse and shame than even the lowest European. But what I wish to emphasise is the fact that his harshness always has some method in it, that it is based upon a policy which, however repulsive to us, is still perfectly intelligible; that his vengeance, even when carried to the most shocking lengths, is still vengeance and not mere purposeless barbarity, and that, so far from tormenting and illtreating his helpless wives or even his domestic animals, he is careful to see that they fare well, not indeed from motives of pure charity, but because he recognises them as valuable assets.

Perhaps my meaning can best be illustrated by comparison between the natives of Nyasaland as they were a few years ago, and as they now are. I have already described the state of the country when we first assumed control there. It was a state of perpetual feud and strife, carried on after the merciless fashion which distinguishes inter-

tribal warfare all over the world. The most detestable atrocities were everywhere practised, not merely on living captives, but even on the bodies of those who had fallen in battle. The same brutality characterised the regular penal codes. Almost every serious offence, including many which civilised tribunals would visit with perhaps two or three months' imprisonment, was punishable by death, preceded too often by hideous forms of torture. Well, what was this, if not mere wantonness? On what reasonable grounds are we to explain this disproportionate, this apparently senseless severity? The answer is that *savage governments can be upheld only by a policy of terror*. Upon the moral checks, which act powerfully elsewhere, they can place hardly any reliance at all. Indeed it may safely be assumed, as a general rule, that the efficacy of moral restraint in any community is in inverse ratio to the degree of artificial restraint imposed by custom or legislation. In an assemblage of saints we may suppose that a penal code would be wholly superfluous. Among ordinary civilised nations, where evil passions co-exist with and are more or less subdued by feelings of honour and humanity, the penal code also exists, but in a correspondingly modified form. Among primitive peoples, where the moral sense is exceptionally feeble, legislative retribution is of necessity exceptionally severe. A savage who knows that he can raid or steal or commit adultery, without incurring the severest punishment, will not scruple to do all these things. But when he knows that

such offences, if proved against him, or perhaps even the suspicion of them, will be visited by death and by the direst physical agony, he hesitates to run the risk.¹ So even those barbarities which seem to us most empty of purpose—the protracted torment of the living, the humiliation of the harmless dead—have their origin in the thoroughly natural and intelligible wish to check crime and disarm hostility by the one method available; namely, by striking mortal fear into all evil-doers within the tribe and all enemies without. That this was so in the case of Nyasaland, the present not less than the former attitude of the natives goes to prove. So long as cruelty was politic, it was, as I have said, freely practised. But with the establishment of British ascendancy, with the general pacification of the country, and with the introduction of civilised courts of law, the whole condition of affairs was altered, and those harsh measures which had once been necessary to safeguard the interests of the tribe at home and abroad fell forthwith

¹ It is worth remarking that, since the advent of British rule in Nyasaland, many of the minor offences, for which capital punishment was awarded by the native tribunals, have, for the time being at any rate, much increased in frequency. Theft, for example, is probably more common than it used to be, while adultery and similar trespasses are most certainly so. On the other hand, those crimes of the first magnitude, which even our own courts visit with the death penalty, are less frequent than formerly—either because, like inter-tribal warfare, they have become practically impossible, or because, like murder, they are more carefully traced and more impartially dealt with. Also I think the very fact that Europeans, known to be a humane people and recognised as a superior people, hold these crimes in abhorrence, inclines the natives to regard them more seriously.

into desuetude. Now if the natives were really cruel at heart in the sense of taking a wanton delight in the spectacle of suffering, it is not to be supposed that they would have wholly desisted from the exercise of cruelty the moment that cruelty ceased to be strictly politic, or even when it came under the ban of a superior power. Debarred from public exhibitions of brutality, they would still have found some vent for their feelings in other and less open ways, in the seclusion of their homes. But I have already stated that, so far from such being the case among Central African natives, it is quite the reverse, and I am inclined to think that in this respect most primitive races are alike—indifferent to suffering, yes; outrageously severe when severity promises to bring them the slightest advantage; but senselessly cruel, no.

The whole attitude of savages, not only in this particular direction, but towards moral questions generally, is decided by the social instincts rather than by any regard for the individual or species. It is of the utmost importance that this peculiarity should be carefully taken into consideration in dealing with the subject of native morals, because to it alone the singular discrepancies which mark the behaviour of savages can be satisfactorily referred. It clearly explains why crimes directed, whether from within or without, against the tribe itself, or which, even though primarily directed against individuals, threaten the social organisation, are always mercilessly punished, while the same or worse crimes, when perpetrated at the

expense of a neighbouring clan, are not only excused, but praised and admired, since in the struggle for tribal existence an injury done to any one tribe is generally an advantage to the others. Thus, for example, an Angoni who stole from another Angoni was liable by native law to be put to death on the spot; but an Angoni who raided an Atonga or Ahenga village was lauded by his people as a bold and successful adventurer, and looked upon as a credit to his race. The establishment of British supremacy, and the consequent dissolution of the tribe as a political organism, has done away to some extent with the sentiments of tribal loyalty and inter-tribal jealousy, or at any rate has relegated them to a narrower sphere—that of the village and locality. But there is still a certain tacit understanding in minor matters, a sort of offensive and defensive alliance, among members of the same tribe; and Europeans themselves recognise this when they deliberately choose their servants from different races, so that the one may act as a check upon the other. Where all the servants belong to the same tribe, it is notorious that thefts of the master's property are peculiarly frequent and peculiarly difficult to trace, for it is then quite hopeless to expect any one of the offenders to give evidence against any other. Their steadfastness in this respect is most remarkable. Neither threats nor persuasion will move them. I was once so exasperated by the repeated purloining of small articles from my premises that I decided, if the thief were not exposed, to fine

my entire household staff (they happened at this time to be nearly all Yaos) a month's pay. I knew for a fact that the pilferer must have been one of my house-boys, and I was morally certain that the others had connived at his proceedings; yet to a man they persisted in their declaration that they knew nothing about it, and in the end I was obliged to put my threat into execution. The same stubborn coherence is frequently shown in courts of law. I have scarcely ever succeeded in inducing natives to bear witness against one of their own tribe, and particularly of their own neighbourhood or village, for any offence committed against a strange native or a European, although an offence against his own community would be voluntarily reported by his fellows, who would rejoice to see him severely punished for it. On the other hand, vices which appear at first sight to affect the individual exclusively, such, for instance, as intemperance, are on that account viewed with absolute unconcern by natives, who, seeing in them nothing calculated either to advance or injure the interests of the community at large, simply pass them over without either praise or censure.¹ As a matter of fact, we know that vices of this kind have results which reach far beyond the individual, and may ultimately affect the community in a serious manner; but the judgment of a savage is not capable of perceiving these remoter consequences, and it is only as he gradually advances out of the

¹ The only exception to this that I can think of is unnatural crime, which all Central African natives hold in strong detestation.

savage state that the self-regarding virtues come to be developed in him. It is in this moral myopia, so to say, this incapacity to realise the full significance of his actions beyond a certain near point, that the so-called immorality of primitive man consists. I do not go to the length of asserting that, if a particular course of conduct could be proved to him by dry demonstration to be fraught with danger to the future of his own tribe, he would merely on that account desist from it; but I do sincerely believe that it is only with the natural growth of experiences of utility that moral intuition is born in the souls of men. I know that to say this is to make profession of a doctrine highly repugnant to many. I know that thousands, who have been forced by overwhelming proof to accept the theory of evolution as applied to our bodies, still shrink from assuming that the god-like attribute of conscience came to us also through lower channels; that the law of honour was once the law of utility, that honesty was once nothing more than the best policy, and that what we do now because we feel it to be right, we did in the beginning because we found it to be advantageous. Yet all the facts bearing upon this question, as far as I have been able to observe them in savage races, and especially among the Central Africans, tend unmistakably towards this conclusion.

CHAPTER XIII

MORAL QUALITIES OF THE NATIVES (*continued*)

AND now to proceed. What of the courage of the natives? Are they a brave race? I have heard very opposite views expressed on this subject, but my own experience of them is that in the face of dangers to which they are accustomed, and of which they fully understand the nature, they are plucky even to sheer foolhardiness. To take a few examples. All Central African natives are more or less inured to the perils of the chase, and are intimately acquainted with the habits of wild beasts. Consequently most of them give proof of a large measure of courage as hunters. I know of one case where a man voluntarily attacked a leopard single-handed, and split its skull with a hatchet; a feat which not one European in a million would dare to attempt. Mr. Alfred Sharpe again told me the following remarkable story. A wart hog which had been wounded took refuge in its burrow, a tunnel just wide enough to admit the body of a man. One of the natives present volunteered to retrieve the animal, and, having stripped off his clothes and taken a knife in his

hand, proceeded to wriggle head foremost into the burrow, gradually disappearing until only his feet remained visible. Immediately afterwards the sound of a violent struggle was heard from the interior of the hole, accompanied by muffled cries and grunts. The man's heels were seized by his companions and he was forcibly hauled back into the light of day, bringing with him the boar, on which he had never relaxed his grasp.

The Atonga of West Nyasa, who are rather fishers than hunters, and who spend a great deal of their time on the water, are peculiarly reckless of the dangers of navigation. I have already mentioned how they will gaily paddle their ridiculous little canoes across the whole breadth of the lake, which is constantly visited by very sudden and furious squalls,¹ the canoes in question being mere hollow logs in which most Europeans would hesitate to commit themselves to a duck-pond. I had once a very direct and striking proof of the absolute contempt in which the Atonga hold the perils of the deep. I was sailing with a companion, Captain Townsend of the Worcestershire Regiment, from Nkata Bay to Usisya in a steel boat manned by a crew of three local natives, when a dangerous storm fell upon us. Before we made out the village fires of Usisya it was pitch dark, the wind was howling like a chorus of demons, and a tempestuous sea was breaking completely over us. The boat, which had much too small a rudder and was awkwardly rigged with a heavy dhow sail, had

¹ Livingstone actually named it the "Lake of Storms."

become almost unmanageable, plunging and reeling through the water like a mad thing. Both Captain Townsend and myself expected every moment that she would capsize, and to capsize under the circumstances meant in all probability nothing less than death for every one of us. I freely confess that for my own part I felt exceedingly uneasy; yet during the whole time that the storm raged the Atonga never ceased to make merry, singing at the highest pitch of their voices their well-known water-song of "Si 'na ma ma,"¹ and greeting each crashing billow with yells of laughter. Of course men accustomed to tempt Providence daily in such things as dug-out canoes might well regard an English-built steel boat as the very ark of safety, yet it is difficult to believe that in such a storm as that which I have described they could have been altogether unconscious of the imminent risk which they were running.

With war in its bloodiest form all Central African natives were for centuries familiar, although in the practice of it some tribes are known to have been much bolder and more successful than others. During several years inter-tribal hostilities have practically ceased to exist, at any rate as a chronic condition; but since that time an experiment of the greatest interest, by

¹ The burden of this song means, I am told, "I have no mother except the Holy Virgin." The air is extremely pretty and has a rhythmical beat, which makes it a special favourite with boatmen. It is even more commonly heard on the Lower river (Shiré) than on Lake Nyasa, and is said to have been taught to the natives, long ago, by the Jesuit missionaries.

which to some extent we may judge of the military courage and capacity of the people, has been tried by forming a regular native regiment under the command of British officers,¹ the several companies being recruited from different tribes, chiefly Wa-Yao and Atonga. The latter did yeoman service in the early campaigns of the Administration, and even in pre-Protectorate days, as, for instance, during the North End War, when considerable levies voluntarily took the field under Mr. Alfred Sharpe, who has always been a strong favourite with the Atonga. The general consensus of opinion, however, among the officers, by whom with marked skill and devotion these troops have been trained and led, seems to be in favour of the Wa-Yao, whose natural intelligence makes them very smart soldiers. The Angoni are so far unrepresented in the regiment. Possibly they might not prove very amenable to discipline, but to their physical dash and bravery the known history of this fine race is sufficient witness. With the corps thus locally raised, and with a small contingent of Sikhs from India, the pacification of all British Central Africa was accomplished. So well indeed did the regiment conduct itself that it was increased in the year 1900 by the addition of a second battalion. Both battalions were represented in the Ashanti campaign of 1900—1901, when they showed conspicuous gallantry and earned high praise, a special contingent being

¹ Drawn both from British line regiments and from the Indian Army.

afterwards sent to England in order to receive their medals at the hands of his Majesty the King.¹ From what I have said it will be gathered that the Central Africans are no cowards in situations, however perilous, with which the habits of their lives have made them familiar. At the same time they are ridiculously afraid of the strange and the unknown, but this arises, strictly speaking, from a particular condition of the mind.

The very worst feature of the natives is beyond all doubt their untruthfulness. For countless generations falsehood has been practised among them, not as many vices are practised, shamefacedly and under the ban of public opinion, but with general toleration and even approval. It may be thought that here we have an exception to the rule that vices which obviously affect the interests of the community in an injurious manner are condemned by savages. It may be argued that when deceit is successfully employed to cover a theft, for example, it does manifestly

¹ Questions, it is true, have been raised from time to time as to the wisdom of giving instruction in the use of modern firearms and in military movements to ignorant natives in a country where they outnumber the European population by nearly 3000 to 1; and in face of what has happened in India, in Uganda, in West Africa, and almost every dependency where native troops have been raised, it would be folly to deny that the practice has in it some element of danger. At the same time there is not at present the slightest reason for calling the perfect loyalty of the Central Africans into question. An excellent check upon them is moreover afforded by the presence of a permanent force of those fine soldiers, the Sikhs, whose natural attachment to their British rulers cannot but be enhanced by the knowledge that in a country like Africa, where both are aliens, the interests of both are peculiarly inter-dependent, and must stand or fall together.

threaten the common weal, in so far as it enables men to steal from each other with impunity. Undoubtedly this is so ; yet clear as the connection may seem to us, it escapes the savage. Trespasses against the rights of property menace him with a force and directness which even he cannot fail to understand. He perceives that thefts, whether great or small, must not be tolerated within the tribe if it is to hold together, and accordingly he regards all such thefts with disfavour and punishes them severely. But the effects of falsehood are too subtle to be fully grasped by him ; the gradations are too fine. There are forms of prevarication, of which the evil is apparent only to highly-developed moral perceptions. Mere exaggeration in telling a story, for instance, or slight perversions of fact in striking a bargain, are regarded by the majority even of civilised men as pardonable. Between the white lie and the black are countless intermediate shades, at one or other of which we probably draw the line, but which the savage does not attempt to distinguish. In accepting one, he accepts all ; he practises all ; he reduces the practice to a system ; he looks upon it as natural, as praiseworthy, as an accomplishment. Even if he could be brought to think otherwise, the idea of actively opposing falsehood would hardly occur to him, and he would probably consider it as idle to try and check the habit of lying as to try and check the habit of breathing. So deeply is the tendency to untruthfulness ingrained in the hearts of these people that I really believe

it is extremely difficult for them to tell a plain unvarnished tale, even when their interests demand nothing else. It would seem as though the nakedness of Truth made her indecent in their eyes, so eager are they to disguise her. Nothing is more common than for a native to bring the strongest and simplest case into a court of justice, and there proceed to throw discredit on his story by introducing into it wholly superfluous inventions, and by involving the facts, in themselves quite clear and sufficient, in a hopeless maze of mis-statement. But it is when his case is naturally weak that the Central African rises most conspicuously to the occasion. Facts to support his contention being non-existent, he draws wholesale upon his imagination. A clever liar he is not. His fables are rudely constructed, and violate probability too much. But what he lacks in adroitness he makes up abundantly in boldness and tenacity. As each successive lie is attacked, he covers it with another; and though by skilful cross-questioning you may easily hustle him into the *impasse* to which his false premisses lead, you can do no more. However hopeless may be the position to which he is forced to commit himself, he abides by it. Reduced to the absurd, he is content to remain absurd rather than retract. I have seen a native driven to a logical conclusion so ridiculous that even his own witnesses burst out laughing, and yet he would not budge from it. As for shame, it is hardly necessary, after the foregoing remarks, to add that the consciousness of even the worst falsehood excites no such

sentiment in a native. He may and probably does feel shame and even remorse after perpetrating an offence which the general opinion of his fellows condemns, but falsehood is a thing which he has never been taught to consider as disgraceful in any way. On the other hand, the sense of exposure, the knowledge that he has acted his part stupidly and has been found out, combined with the fear of punishment, does certainly make him feel very uncomfortable, and his features then express the utmost sulkiness and confusion. We cannot, however, justly assume that because the Central Africans are false now, they are false beyond redemption. It is not with them as with some Asiatic races, whose peculiar national character had been completely formed long before we had anything to do with them, whose mental powers had been developed to a high, nay to an exquisite degree, to a degree which made them intellectually independent of us, and in whom it is pretty safe to conclude that the instinct of deceit, since it has survived so far in so marked a form, is ineradicable.

The wild African is the rough, plastic material of humanity. Into what he will ultimately be moulded nobody can with certainty predict, but for my own part a certain virile and joyous strain in the nature of these people inclines me to think that they are more likely to be found wanting in other directions than that which we are discussing. Nevertheless we have to reckon seriously with their present unreliability, and too much stress can hardly be laid upon this point. I know how

very difficult it is for a European to realise that those who have done him faithful service for years, the men who have tended him in sickness and health, the men with whom he has hunted, the men who have marched and fought at his orders, would, under altered circumstances, not hesitate to take his honour and his life. Yet the whole history of our dealings with savage races, and even with some races which are very far from being savage, warns us that this is so. What of the Indian Mutiny? What of the disturbances in China? What of the recent revolt of the Uganda Rifles? What of the treachery which has done to death so many travellers, sportsmen, and missionaries in all parts of Asia and Australasia? Nothing in the records of our colonial empire is more pathetic than the oft-repeated story of confidence misplaced and betrayed. Individual cases have occurred, I know, where natives have shown the most noble devotion and loyalty towards their masters; but if we review the evidence on this subject as a whole, we must admit that the risk of trusting to them in matters of life and death is frightful. Is the native then devoid of gratitude? In a certain sense I think not, but such gratitude as he feels, towards white men at any rate, is hardly what we should consider deserving of the name. Natives become attached to a good master (often for the matter of that to a bad one) partly through force of habit, partly perhaps through appreciation of the comparative ease and comfort which they enjoy in domestic service, but principally, I think,

through concentration on an individual of the sentiment of respect which they feel for white people generally. That a man, who is in the first place a European and in the second place their own "bwana" (master), should suffer pain or be deprived of accustomed conveniences almost scandalises them, and they will grudge no effort, under these circumstances, to relieve him or to supply his needs.

I was peculiarly fortunate in my servants when I was in Central Africa. Two of them, an Atonga and a Yao, remained with me during the whole time (five years) that I lived in the country, and no men could have served me more cheerfully and loyally. When travelling I never gave myself the least concern about my loads or my camp, so long as they were with me. On reaching the end of a day's stage, I would always find my tent pitched, my table spread, my bag unpacked, my lamp lit. Did I express a wish for eggs, fruit, vegetables, or anything that could be locally procured, one of them would set off directly to fetch it. In my own house at Zomba they worked equally well, and took the greatest pride in my belongings. In sickness above all they stood by me with marvellous patience. For several weeks on half-a-dozen different occasions those two took it in turns to tend me all day and sit at my door all night. The vile irritability of temper which continuous suffering breeds in the best of us was powerless to shake their fidelity. I had but to raise a finger, and one or other of them was that instant at my side. They never failed, they never

grumbled, they asked for no reward. I have occasionally heard men remark that the Central African negroes are bad servants and untrustworthy nurses; and, as I have had and shall have occasion to say some hard things of the natives in other respects, I gladly record my own appreciation of them in these capacities. Of course they are not all equally satisfactory, and of course it is absurd to expect also that they shall be as neat and skilful as a trained European valet or waiter. They will steal a little, too, as opportunity offers, from what they regard as the superfluous abundance of their master's stores. But taken for all in all, and duly considering how short has been their experience of us and of our strange ways and requirements, they are wonderfully good and faithful. I have even been tempted sometimes to mistake their marked devotion for real gratitude, yet on reflection I feel convinced, as I have said already, that it springs only from the strong respect which natives feel for all white men, and which they entertain, as a rule, in a highly intensified form for their own particular lords and masters. A European in their eyes is a being so superior to other men that it strikes them as almost unseemly that he should not have things as he wants them. They will often follow him into danger and abide by him in adversity up to a certain point, because they feel sure that he will ultimately triumph. But when the Fates are clearly and hopelessly against him, when it becomes obvious even to them that his power has gone from him, at the very moment when

true gratitude and affection would show itself most unmistakably, I am afraid—and this is one of the hard things I spoke of just now—I am afraid that mere desertion is the least evil to be apprehended from our black brothers. Lucky the man who trusting to them in such a predicament escapes with a whole throat!

Pride is a less acute and less universal feeling among the Central Africans than vanity. The chiefs, headmen, and other village notables have, it is true, a certain sense of their positions, and show this clearly enough in their manner, speech, and bearing. So have many native servants, overseers, clerks, soldiers, and so forth, whose education or training has imbued them with a consciousness of superiority. But the ordinary native rarely troubles to stand on his dignity. On the other hand, the vanity of all natives is unbounded, and renders them highly sensitive to ridicule, a circumstance of which great advantage may be taken when dealing with them. I think everybody who knows these people will agree with me that a little ironical humour does wonders with them, and will often prove more effectual than the severest censure. Natives have little self-control, and, except when restrained by the immediate presence of Europeans, give way readily to the violent emotions—indignation, anger, grief, despair; but they recover their normal spirits very quickly.

The Atonga are by far the most excitable native race in British Central Africa. There is something rather engaging about these frank and

boisterous *enfants terribles*, and I have always liked them personally; but, unless very well trained, their presence is not altogether desirable in a decently-furnished dwelling, where, through excess of zeal, they incline to play the part of the proverbial bull in the china shop. Shortly after coming to the country I employed several Atonga servants, but it was not long before I was forced to recognise that such spirits as theirs needed a much wider sphere than my house could safely afford. I could never induce them to enter or leave a room at anything short of the *pas de charge*, whether at the moment their hands happened to be full of my crockery and glass or not; or to shut a door without banging it off its hinges; or to communicate an order except at the full pitch of their remarkably fine lungs. They were also quarrelsome, and too fond of combining with other Atonga boys to avenge real or fancied grievances upon the local Yaos, whereby were hatched bitter feuds and complicated *mirandus*.¹ So in the end I had to get rid of them altogether, except the one whom I have previously mentioned as having stayed with me during the whole time that I was in the country, and he was an exceptional boy. On the "ulendo," where their high animal spirits can be indulged without fear of breaking anything (one's camp plates and pots being usually of enamelled iron), Atonga are quite admirable.

In the *expression* of the emotions Central Africans are open and simple enough. Their

¹ "Mirandu" or "Magambo" = a dispute, law-suit, debate.

faces are generally a true index to their feelings ; and although at first, owing to the darkness of their skins and the thickness of their features, the play of expression may not be very apparent to a European, yet one soon learns to follow it and to draw one's own conclusions therefrom. I have noticed no peculiar forms of salutation among them, except on the Lower Zambesi, where they clap the hands. Elsewhere one is sometimes received with attempts, more or less ridiculous, at our own military salute, often accompanied by the word "Mornin," a corruption of the English "Good morning," which, however, the natives use all through the day irrespective of particular hours. With regard to affirmation and negation, the natives use the lateral shake in negation, but not invariably nor in a pronounced fashion—a mere turn of the head is often all ; and I rather think that the habit, where it exists, may have been picked up from Europeans, as I have noticed it most often in those who have come into contact with white men. Comparing the Central Africans with other native races, whose expressions of affirmation and negation are described in Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions*,¹ we find that their affirmative sign, *i. e.* an upward and backward jerk of the head, agrees with that of the Abyssinians, the Tagals of the Philippines, and the Maoris of New Zealand, while the same sign is employed in a directly opposite sense by the natives of Gippsland in Australia, by the modern Greeks and Turks and

¹ Pages 286-292.

by the Hindoos, so that there seems to be no great uniformity in this direction. Darwin, in dealing with this sign (backward movement of the head) as an expression of negation, attempts to connect it with the action of an infant refusing food. On the other hand, if we regard it as an affirmative, we have what seems to me a less far-fetched explanation in supposing it to be the preliminary movement of the ordinary vertical nod, or possibly, as Darwin himself suggests,¹ a readjustment of the head after it has been nodded forwards and downwards. One constantly sees Europeans jerk the head backwards in token of acquiescence. The expression of negation is often accompanied among the Central Africans by a slight shrugging of the shoulders, and they will sometimes turn out the palms of the hands in supplication, or when the question to be answered implies a charge which they wish to repudiate. Often natives will hardly support an ordinary affirmation or denial by any but the slightest movements of the face and limbs, but this is usually when the interrogator is a strange European, in which case their shyness probably restrains them. Among themselves, especially when an important question is being debated, they will supplement their arguments by violent gesticulation, and there is no doubt that this is their tendency at all times. Before leaving this subject, it is worth while to note one distinct and very curious form of negation which is reserved for meeting questions to which the person inter-

¹ *Expression of the Emotions*, p. 292.

rogated does not choose to return a direct answer—either because he has not made up his mind on the point, or because he fears to offend the questioner, or because the question itself strikes him as absurd, extravagant, or indelicate. In such cases negation is conveyed by a high, thin, artificial laugh or squeak, exactly as though to say: “How can you ask me such a thing?” The sound is really nothing more or less than a modified giggle, but its universal acceptance as part of the current coin of language in Central Africa, and the subtle exactness of the place which it fills in the scale of negative expression, make it remarkable and (so far as I know) unique.

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITIONS

I HAVE tried to show in Chapter X. how native politics were affected by British intervention, how their development along independent lines was suddenly checked, and how the then existing political organisation (the tribe) was dissolved and reduced into the lower and simpler form (the village community), out of which it had previously sprung. Upon native religion our presence has had nearly the same disintegrating effect as upon native politics. In neither direction had the people advanced very far. There was little in their frail and rude systems of government and theology that could endure the shock of contact with a civilised nation. The work of demolition, which must always precede any attempt to remodel the constitution of things, was an easy task for us in this case.

Twelve or fifteen years of vigorous supervision have sufficed to sweep away the ill-constructed work of unknown centuries, to shatter the humble political machinery, to undermine the childish religious beliefs. It is, of course, difficult now to say how far religious and political development

had kept pace with each other. Major Ellis¹ justly insists that "the possession of a number of general objects of worship" denotes an advance in the evolution of religion from the stage where there are no such general objects, but only a multitude of particular ones, and says: "It will hardly be disputed that, as the village community is necessarily antecedent to the tribe, the village god must be an earlier conception than the tribal god." We might therefore naturally expect that in powerful and comparatively well-organised tribes, such, for instance, as were the Wa-Yao and Angoni thirty years ago, there would be tribal gods recognised as such by all people of Yao or Angoni blood whatever village or district inhabiting. Some natives have assured me that this was the case, but it is exceedingly difficult to get them to talk of such things seriously and freely. As a rule they either take alarm, or more often speak in a very vague way, laughing shamefacedly as though conscious that their notions must appear ridiculous to white men. Still, from all that we can gather, it seems pretty clear that, before we came to the country, the religious conceptions of the natives were more advanced and better defined than they are to-day.

We know, for example, that there were certain superior deities worshipped by comparatively large numbers of people, such as Mpambe the Lightning God, and Mtanga the Seed-Giver. The latter resided on Mangochi Hill,² which was

¹ *Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 14.

² A peak in the district of South Nyasa.

held in such peculiar veneration by the Wa-Yao that that excellent observer, the Rev. Duff Macdonald, compares it to the "many-ridged Olympus" of the Greeks. Now, of the scores of natives whom I have questioned at different times, only two or three admitted that they knew anything at all about these gods, who appear nevertheless to have been widely recognised a few years ago. Generally speaking, the religious ideas of the people seem to be in a transitional and chaotic state. The old beliefs have lost ground; and, although the doctrines of Christ and of Mahomet are replacing them in some neighbourhoods, the great bulk of the native population may practically be said to have no definite, coherent faith whatever. Such forms of worship as still obtain among them belong to almost the lowest stages of religious evolution. The spirits of departed chiefs, for instance, receive homage from the particular villagers over whom they presided, but not from other villagers; and thus each little hamlet may be said to have its own deity, or rather perhaps its own guardian, for it is extremely doubtful whether natives regard the spirits of the dead as gods in the strict sense of the term. I know that the gods of *natural features* have been considered by some writers to have originated in this ancestor worship; and sometimes no doubt the memory of a great warrior, for instance, may become so firmly associated with the scene of his exploits or his place of residence that he assumes after death the rank of a local deity, and continues for generations to be revered as such. But

ordinarily the spirits of departed chiefs are worshipped in succession, each as he dies replacing the other as an object of veneration, and in such cases the spirits are certainly approached as familiar protectors rather than as actual gods. Duff Macdonald, although he does not elaborate this distinction, admits it in a forcible and eloquent passage,¹ which describes so well the attitude of the natives in this respect that I shall offer no apology for quoting it here.

“He (the native) looks back to the days of his youth. He remembers a grandfather who told how he had fled from the face of an oppressor, how he had built his home far up near the mountain-top, and there brought up his family in safety. By and by, as dangers passed away, this ancestor moved further down the mountain; gradually he increased his power, and in his old age found himself the chief of a clan. Yet he never forgot the days of his adventure, and ever pointed proudly to the spot where he had first found a shelter; and his children’s children, as they listened to the old man’s tale, counted the ground holy. The days come when they can see the old man no more. ‘But does he not still exist? Yea—did we not hear his words as we listened to the sounds that played down the mountain-side? . . . He is living on our mountain still. He is taking care of us. He knows when we need rain, and he sends it. We must give him something; when he had corn he always gave us. Now the poor man has no crop, but perhaps his needs are many. We will give him food, we will

¹ *Africana*, vol. i. pp. 72-74.

give him slaves, and he will not forget us.' There is something full of pathos in the sight of a man invoking his deceased relatives. He has got into great difficulty. None of his friends can assist him; they hardly sympathise with him. His thoughts turn to the days when he had no difficulty, to the bright period of which, heathen as he is, he can say, 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy.' He is so sure that, if he only had the grey-headed man that smiled on him then, all his difficulties would vanish. That man could understand him and believe good of him as he did long ago. Could he but reach him across the portals of the grave, all would be well. Thus with great earnestness the native turns to the spirits of his fathers."

We see here what really lies at the bottom of ancestor worship; the intense wayward longing of the savage for something that he can understand, and which will understand him in return. His sluggish reason, unaccustomed to grapple with any problem that can possibly be avoided, his childish imagination, stimulated by the wild life of the woods, induce him to assign to a malevolent agency everything which he cannot easily comprehend.

"*Omne ignotum pro horribili*" might well be the motto of the people of Central Africa. Vaguely they feel that there must be gods of the forest and the lake, of sun and storm and darkness; but these to their minds are shadowy and terrible powers. It is not very long since the European himself with his pale face, his fierce blue eyes, his unaccountable habits, his extra-

ordinary engines and appliances, was included in the category of bogies. Fifteen years of good government have of course done much to remove this impression, and several natives have of late personally visited the mysterious "Ingiland" and have returned safe and sound, to tell in their villages the story of what they saw beyond the "Big Water" (Madzi wokulu = the sea). Yet though we are no longer distrusted, nearly all natives assert that we are different beings from themselves. Duff Macdonald states that we are held to have "stayed longer with the people of God, and to have learned more than black men,"¹ and this is well borne out by the following anecdote. When I was leaving Africa in 1899 to return to England on furlough, I took with me one of my native servants, a raw boy, as far as our seaport of Chinde, where he saw for the first time in his life an ocean-going steamer. It was dark when we arrived, and the portholes of the vessel, as she lay at her moorings, were brilliantly lighted; for she was to sail on the morrow, and most of her passengers were already on board. The boy's surprise was great. He could not understand how a ship that seemed to be "full of fire" could escape being consumed. I explained the phenomenon by telling him that the radiance which he saw was only the light of many lanterns, and went on to describe as well as I could some of the other wonders of the great liner, asking him afterwards, in order to see what he would say, why black men did not invent similar

¹ *Africana*, vol. i. p. 75.

conveniences for themselves. He hesitated for a moment and then answered, "We have no such magic (*mankwala*). The white men are the children of God (*Mlungu*), and so they understand many things" (*kuziwa kw'ambiri*). "And what of your people?" I inquired. "Did God make them also or not?" "Perhaps," he rejoined, "but," with a sudden burst of inspiration, "I think he made us to be your *tenga-tenga*" (*carriers*).

Such being the attitude of the native, it is easy to understand how powerfully ancestor worship appeals to him. Surrounded by natural phenomena of which the true causes are beyond his knowledge, ruled by a strange people who, though just and humane, can enter but little into his thoughts and ways, and whom he regards as another creation, he turns for help in his everyday troubles with passionate plenitude of belief to the spirits of those familiar dead whose living voices cheered and guided his youth. When he wishes to make a journey, when he is sick, when his crops need rain, it is to them that he prays. An offering of flour is poured upon the ground; and if it fall so as to produce a finely-tapered cone, all will be well. If not, it is a bad omen, and the flour must be poured again. Should it fall otherwise than in the desired form, the worst is to be feared, unless the village oracle can ascertain what is wrong and prescribe a way out of the difficulty. As a rule the actual presentation of the offering is performed, not by the person immediately concerned, but by the village chief for the time being,

who in such matters acts as the high priest of his people. But if the suppliant be in no way related to the chief (an unusual circumstance), he may offer sacrifice personally to his own family god, instead of addressing the village god in the customary manner.¹ Should the prayers be answered, thankofferings are dedicated to the spirit. Besides flour, various other things, such as beer, tobacco, fowls, goats, etc., are used as offerings; and in former days human beings were frequently immolated. I have never seen any idols in the country, nor heard of any except those which Livingstone found near Lake Mweru in what is now North-Eastern Rhodesia.

Some curious rites and practices connected with birth, marriage, death, and the administration of justice, notably the ordeal by poison and other ceremonies connected with witchcraft, I shall deal with later on.

Minor superstitions are, as might have been expected, almost endless. The rabbit is a creature of ill-omen; and so are many snakes, especially the python. The harmless chameleon again is much disliked by the natives, who regard it as typifying the enemy of mankind, and sometimes kill it by putting tobacco in its mouth. Another common belief is that certain persons have the power, either of making wild animals do their

¹ In this admission of the family god as a definite conception, merging however in the village god, and separately worshipped only by those individuals who, on account of their alien blood, have no claim upon the latter, we see another instance of the close parallel which exists between the different stages of religious and political development.

will, or of temporarily assuming the shape and strength of such animals, just as in Europe some wizards were formerly credited with being able to change themselves into "wehr-wolves."

Superstition is connected with salt; and it is commonly held that if a husband eat salt from the hand of an unfaithful wife, he will die. So strong was this feeling that in Duff Macdonald's time, natives, after absence from their homes, refused to touch salt (of which nevertheless they are inordinately fond), fearing lest their wives might have misconducted themselves in the meantime. I am bound to say that I have never personally known natives to refuse salt, although I am afraid this can scarcely be attributed to increased confidence in their womankind.

Various creatures are held to be unclean, including all those which are in the habit of preying upon dead human bodies, such as hyænas, vultures, crows, etc., and this prejudice is extended by some to animals like the bushbuck, which, as I have already mentioned in Chapter VIII., are fond of frequenting native burying-grounds, for no other reason than because they are little liable to be disturbed there.¹ Everything connected with death is regarded with aversion and fear by the natives, who rarely or never go near the place where their dead lie, and will not, if they can help it, allow Europeans to do so, although their fear of disobliging may

¹ I believe this feeling about the bushbuck, a singularly pretty antelope, and most excellent eating besides, is confined to certain of the Lake (Nyasa) tribes. It is certainly not shared by the natives of the Shiré Highlands.

sometimes induce them to consent to a visit being paid to the grave of some chief.

It is illustrative of the vagueness of the ideas which natives entertain about the supernatural, and also of their strong disinclination to communicate these ideas to strangers, that, after having spent five years in close and direct contact with them, and having lost no opportunity of trying to ascertain their beliefs, I find myself more imperfectly equipped with facts on this subject than on any other connected with these people; while of the many Europeans, long resident in Central Africa, whom I have consulted from time to time, scarcely one has been able to supplement my scanty information to any appreciable extent. And so it happens that I can do little more than sum up an interesting topic in Sir Harry Johnston's words—

“If they (the natives) analyzed their own beliefs, they would probably admit that, in most cases, spirit life had a definite duration, after which it faded away into the Central God ‘Mulungu,’ or into nothingness.”

CHAPTER XV

MENTAL QUALITIES OF THE NATIVES

WITHIN certain limits the intellectual powers of the natives are by no means despicable. The immense majority are of course profoundly ignorant, and live in a manner which hardly calls for the exercise of any but the lowest faculties of the mind. Since the advent of a European Government, however, a few natives have been regularly trained in the mission schools and elsewhere ; and although the proportion which these bear to the entire population is naturally very small, yet it gives us some definite ground on which to base an opinion. Up to a certain point, then, natives show quite remarkable aptitude. For instance, they learn to read, write, and speak our language, after their own fashion, more quickly than most of us can learn theirs.¹ To be sure, none of them achieve or even desire great proficiency in foreign tongues. All they care about is to be able to make themselves roughly understood. Their written compositions in particular are often extremely funny. The following speci-

¹ Most natives are well versed in two or three local dialects besides their own.

men, produced by one of my own servants after less than a year's study, and culled almost at random from a collection of similar documents, gives a fair idea of native epistolary style. I have corrected the spelling and punctuation.

"MY MASTER PLEASE :

"Che¹ Robert have tell me you are gone at Mpimbi by morning. Che Robert say you want too much small shoots. Please, sir, I give you all small ones ; here is now only bird shoots. I send them with Che Robert ; he will go quickly at Mpimbi. Che Mkanda comes here yesterday to speak of his mirandu at you, because his wife run away to Che Mkawa, and that woman's mother is bad for Che Mkanda. So all Che Mkanda's village is trouble. How this is bad, sir ! I say to Che Mkanda, ' Please my master are gone by his ulendo ; so after you shall speak at him.' Sorry I tell you this woman trouble.

"Your Boy

"Che JAMES."

Done into plain English, the above would read as follows :

"PLEASE, MY MASTER—

"Robert tells me that you went to Mpimbi this morning. Robert says you want plenty of small (*i.e.* rifle) cartridges. Please, sir, I gave

¹ Che.—A polite prefix, signifying much the same as our "Mr." It is not usually applied to Europeans, but is rarely omitted by natives when speaking of or to one another.

you all the small ones. There are now only bird (shot) cartridges here. I send you these by Robert, who will go quickly to Mpimbi. Mkanda came here yesterday to make a complaint to you because his wife has run away to Mkawa, and his mother-in-law is quarrelling with him. So all is trouble in Mkanda's village. Please, sir, how bad this is! I told Mkanda that you had gone on a journey, but that he could speak to you on your return. I am sorry to trouble you about this woman.

“Your boy
“JAMES.”

It will be remarked that “James” is very weak in his prepositions, and has a scanty vocabulary and a peculiar idiom, but still his general meaning is sufficiently intelligible; and if we take into consideration that this letter and scores of others like it are the outcome of twelve or eighteen months of study, sometimes even less, following on perhaps twenty years of savage ignorance, then we must admit some degree of aptitude in the writers.

Again, in different trades and crafts natives rapidly attain, under European supervision, to a certain skill; notably as carpenters, gardeners, bricklayers, printers, and so forth. I have already mentioned that some of them make excellent domestic servants. Many are employed as clerks in the various Government departments and commercial offices, as overseers on the estates of coffee-planters, as pilots on the gunboats and

trading steamers, and in many other capacities calling for some amount of intelligence. As soldiers they are exceptionally smart, and probably drill as well as any native troops in the world.¹ Among themselves, as I have remarked, natives have little occasion for using their brains. They are, however, fond of oratorical displays and are good debaters in their own way. I used to call the chiefs and headmen of my district together, whenever any question arose which it seemed necessary to explain to them, or on which I thought it advisable to consult their opinion; and this often elicited most spirited and amusing discussions, in which, as a rule, four or five men would take a leading part, the remainder encouraging the spokesmen by affirmative grunts and by exclaiming at frequent intervals, "A mangwetu!" "A tati!" "Nangolo!" ("Ah, my home!" "My father!" "My parents!") Supposing the question at issue to be connected with the labour supply, I begin, let us say, by a general statement of the case. A certain number of men are wanted for this purpose, a certain number for that. A trader's goods are lying at one of the Lower River stations for want of porters. An official is waiting for carriers to take

¹ They have a veritable passion for performing military movements. I actually found it necessary, in order to obtain a little respite from the sound of the sergeant's voice, to forbid my civil police to drill for more than a certain number of hours in the day. Even the young children love to play at being "askari" (soldiers), and nothing is funnier than to see them draw up their fat little bodies on their weak spindle legs as a European passes by, and solemnly give him what they conceive to be the military salute.

him on a journey. No men have volunteered for the work, and therefore the chiefs are called upon to use their influence. All listen very attentively to this declaration, and presently one of the older men gets up and remarks blandly that all his people are busy hoeing their gardens, and that is why they have not come to work for the white man. I answer that that is nonsense, because everybody knows it is not men but women who hoe the gardens. The other natives present, quick to appreciate every thrust and parry of debate, burst into sudden laughter at this. But the old man, not in the least disconcerted, goes on to tell me that he has only a few people now; many died during the last famine, or went away to other districts. I ask how many huts are left in his village. The old man says with an air of lofty indifference that he really does not know; but on being pressed, he may admit that there are fifteen, or twenty, or thirty. I remind him that I saw a great many more than that when I passed through his village only a month ago. He persists in his statement, however, and so I call for the district census-book, which is kept regularly up to date, and from which it appears that this chief has nearly a hundred huts. The laugh goes round again, and in the midst of it another man rises. He takes up a different position from the first speaker, and insists that chiefs have no longer the power which they once possessed; that his people refuse to work, and that if he tried to compel them they would leave him. A chorus of approving groans supports this argument, which

is really not altogether devoid of truth. I meet it as best as I can, and hastily recapitulate and amplify the arguments for my side. I draw attention to the benefits which accrue to natives from the presence of Europeans. "Who," I inquire, "protects you from the Angoni? The Mzungu (European). Who hears and settles your disputes? The Mzungu. Who gave your people grain during the last famine? Who gave them *mankwala* (medicine) when they were sick of the small-pox? Who shoots nyama for them? The Mzungu. And after all this you will not send the Mzungu a few carriers. There are sixty thousand people in this district. I want only a hundred and fifty. Are the white man's loads to rot on the path because I cannot get them?" This is answered perhaps by a third speaker, who goes over the whole ground again, repeating what he considers the most forcible points in his predecessor's remarks, and introducing any fresh arguments which suggest themselves to him. The speeches are of course much longer than I have represented them to be. As a rule natives approach any question at issue in an extremely roundabout way, and involve their real meaning in a cloud of oratory more picturesque than lucid or coherent.

To their minds the disposition or attitude towards affairs which we call "business-like" is scarcely comprehensible. An old trader once assured me that he often used to spend as much as three days in bargaining for a single tusk of ivory with the Atonga of Lake Nyasa; and in

the same way judicial cases of the most trivial kind are ridiculously protracted by interminable orations and by evidence given in the form of a wandering narrative, into which is introduced a variety of matter apparently quite irrelevant to the subject in hand. Of course it is natural enough that this should be so ; that the mind of the native should work tardily and deviously ; that its sense of proportion should be defective and its self-reliance small. The faculty of rapid analysis and decision, of sifting a mass of considerations so as to clear the essential points, and of forming prompt conclusions in accordance with those points, is a faculty which owes its origin and development to artificial conditions of life, to conditions of which the savage has had no experience at all. Amid the stress and tumult of civilised existence, amid the distractions of a thousand conflicting duties and interests, men learn to attain their ends with the least possible expenditure of time ; to arrange, to systematise, to be alert, direct, exact. But the wild man is in a very different case. His life moves placidly and simply. His days are his own. The constant sun shines on him. The fruitful earth repays his lazy culture with marvellous abundance. Of the complex necessities that harass the white races, of the pressure, the rivalry, the ceaseless demands on energy and time that brace their faculties to clearness and promptitude, he is totally ignorant. Under these circumstances his mind remains confused and feeble, and, when roused into temporary activity, gropes and wanders by circuitous ways.

It will therefore easily be understood that in any capacity requiring ready, precise, and independent action of the mind he can be most irritating to Europeans. And yet to lose patience with him is to lose everything. The long hours spent in sitting on a camp-stool listening to his diffuse arguments are not wasted. There is no surer way of winning his confidence than to give him a fair hearing. Cut his stupid story short, send him away puzzled and rebuffed, and he will trouble you no more certainly, but neither will he ever come again to tell you little things that you may very much wish to know; what the villagers are saying about such and such a matter; where the thieves are hiding who stole your loads; whether the path you used to travel by is practicable or not; in what dambo the elands are feeding, and where the elephants have gone.

Natives have very strong powers of observation, and, like children, will often notice details which might escape mature minds. They are particularly sharp at remarking any personal oddity in a stranger. Nearly all white men are known among the natives by special nicknames expressive of some peculiarity of appearance or habits, or perhaps commemorative of some adventure in which they have figured. It often happens, however, that a name originally bestowed upon one filling a conspicuous position in the native eye is gradually extended to his house, his business or employment, and almost everything connected with him, and is afterwards transferred to his successors. The word *Mandala*, meaning

the African Lakes Corporation, and familiarly accepted in this sense all over Central Africa, from Lake Tanganyika to the sea, is a good example of such wide application from a single individual. The individual in this case was Mr. John Moir, a well-known Central African pioneer, and one of the founders of the African Lakes Corporation. Mr. Moir wore spectacles. The natives whom he met had never seen such things before, and at once christened them *Mandala*, which properly denotes a reflection in still water. The name passed from the spectacles to their wearer, from him to his place of residence, and by degrees to the Company in which he was interested, enlarging its significance until it came to be universally employed even by Europeans to represent either the African Lakes Corporation as a body or any of the numerous outposts and branches of that firm in various parts of Central Africa.

The name by which I was myself known to natives in and around Zomba—*Maganga*, that is to say, a stone or rock—illustrates the same point. The first stone building erected in Zomba was the prison. The natives remarked its difference from the surrounding brick structures, and called it *Nyumba wa Maganga*—the House of Stone. Now the magistrate in charge of the district is of course the person who commits peccant natives to prison, and thus the word *Maganga* became so closely associated with me that it eventually took the place of my proper name, and was also used generally in respect of the department of Govern-

ment which I then represented in Zomba. Nor have I much doubt that it will be applied to all those who may hereafter occupy the same position. These two instances will sufficiently explain how far native appellations are often diverted from their first significance, and how easy it is to blunder in attempting to trace their origin. I can picture some intelligent traveller visiting Zomba years hence, and making a note of the circumstance that the Collectors of that district have always been known by the name of *Maganga*. The said traveller will inquire what *Maganga* means, and, on being told that it represents a stone, will, by a natural association of ideas, decide that the original *Maganga* must have been a stern, cold, hard-hearted person—a ruthless judge. Nothing indeed is more certain than that a man coming to a country like Central Africa for the first time, and making notes there without sifting them to the uttermost, will fall into all sorts of absurd errors like this. In the first place, the natives have many tricks of speech which might well mislead strangers. They invariably answer a leading question in the affirmative where we should use a negative. For instance, if one says to them, “So and so has not returned, eh?” the answer, if the person is still absent, will be “Yes,” meaning “Yes, you are right; he has not returned.” Again, when natives make up their minds to be communicative, they bother themselves very little about the accuracy of their statements, and will often invent stories wholesale, either for the mere pleasure of exercising

their imaginations or from a polite anxiety to give the white man something sensational for his note-book. It is therefore most important never to put any query to them in the form of a suggestion, or to let them have any hint as to the sort of reply which is expected. Indeed, the most reliable information is probably that which is obtained indirectly.

All natives have a lively though rather coarse sense of humour, and intensely appreciate a joke, especially if it be of a practical kind. Once a boy who had come with me for the first time in his life on a duck-shooting expedition to Lake Chilwa, tumbled out of a canoe into a shallow part where there was only about three feet of water. Imagining it to be much deeper, he began to swim about excitedly, calling for help to the men who were still in the canoe. These, however, being natives of Chilwa and knowing perfectly well that the lake there was not deep enough to drown anybody, pushed him off with their paddles as often as he attempted to climb back. I was walking along the shore at the time, and my attention was first drawn to what had happened by the laughter of the boatmen, which grew louder and louder as the wretched boy, who happened not to be a good swimmer, became more and more exhausted, and at last, after puffing and blowing for some time, threw up his hands and sank theatrically, not into a watery grave as he had expected, but barely deeper than his waist. This climax was certainly ludicrous enough, but such convulsions of merriment as it caused among

the men in the canoe I have seldom witnessed. They clasped each other in their arms, rocking themselves to and fro in ecstasies for a full quarter of an hour. The story was immediately told on our return to camp, and for days afterwards shrieks of laughter greeted the hero of it whenever he appeared. Little incidents of this kind, which frequently occur, especially in the course of a journey, are eagerly seized upon by native *raconteurs*, and added to their regular stock-in-trade of stories. Indeed, most of the uproarious mirth which centres about their fires at night is provoked by sallies having reference to some such misadventure as that which I have described. Many of their anecdotes, however, are at the expense of the white man, and make fun of his appearance or habits, or relate how he was outwitted on some occasion or other.

The sense of beauty is, of course, very defective in the Central Africans. Beyond their few personal ornaments, there is nothing which they seem to cherish on account of its appearance only, or on the decoration of which they bestow any pains. The sublimest scenery leaves them totally unmoved. The most brilliant flowers are without any attraction for them, and are neither cultivated in their gardens nor plucked in a wild state from the woods. Nothing in the beauty of animate creatures touches them. In the work of their own hands, again, there is hardly a trace of any effort to realise even the rudest conception of the beautiful. Their houses are mere shelters of grass and mud. Their implements and utensils

are of the plainest description. As for pretty and interesting curios, they are almost entirely absent ; and even the few specimens of wood-carving, bead-work, and so forth, which one sees from time to time, are manufactured as a rule for sale to Europeans. The truth is that the point of view of pure æsthetics is unintelligible to these natives. They can understand well enough that a plant should be grown for the sake of its fruit, that a tree should be spared because it happens to shade a man's hut, that birds and animals should be preserved and bred in order to provide food. Also they perceive well enough (though they are much too lazy to attempt anything of the kind themselves) why white men take the trouble to build brick houses, and to invent and construct appliances which take the place of manual labour or minister to personal comfort. But to prize any natural object as a thing of beauty apart from and above its material value, or to devote time and intense labour to the creation of merely beautiful things, or to the elaboration of purely æsthetic details in articles of everyday use, would strike them as ridiculous, if they ever gave the subject a serious thought, which I hardly believe they do.

So very poor is their sense of form and order, that it is next to impossible to get a native to realise the difference between a straight line and a crooked one, or to see where the approximate centre of a regular figure lies. I used to think that they were merely careless about these matters, as among themselves they certainly are—witness even the random distribution of huts

and gardens in any native village ; but experience has since convinced me that they suffer from a real and complete lack of what somebody has called "the prehensile eye." A native servant laying a table for dinner, and being honestly anxious to humour his master by having everything as it should be, according to the peculiar whims of white men, will yet deliberately put down a centre-piece several inches out of its proper place. A native gardener, equally conscientious, will hoe what should be a straight border in a series of zigzags. One has but to stand over the men and watch them at work to see that they are genuinely incapable of even approximately fixing the relative positions of objects without the aid of some mechanical device. Gradations of colour, on the other hand, they can readily distinguish, as I have often proved by experiment. Their language has, however, very few terms in which to express such distinctions, and consequently they will often give the same name to two or more different shades, though quite conscious that they are not really identical.

The folk-lore of these people is copious, but throws little or no light on their origin or history. Most of it is cast in the shape of fables, in which various animals and birds are introduced. Riddles and catch-words are also common, but the most characteristic and pleasing of native compositions are to be found among their songs, of which a considerable number are recognised nearly all over the country, and must have been in existence

for at least a generation or two; possibly much longer. These are always arranged in parts with regular responses. There do not seem to be any songs for a single voice, and curiously enough even the part songs are only sung by the people when travelling. One never hears them in the villages. The Central African native makes plenty of noise when he is at home, certainly; he chatters, laughs, twangs his gourd harp, beats his drum, or yells madly at his beer dances; but his real songs are reserved for the ulendo (journey). Machilla carriers in particular seem to derive great encouragement from the sound of their own voices, and will often sing on the road almost continuously for hours at a stretch. Some of the prettiest of these ulendo songs are composed with a deliberate view to onomotopœia, and are set to tunes which reproduce very effectively the notes of birds, the cries of wild animals, or the noise of wind or running water. Although many of the Yao airs are quite charming, as are also the boat songs which one hears among the Atonga of West Nyasa and the Achikunda¹ of the Lower Shiré, none can compare, as I think, with the really beautiful chants of the Angoni. These latter include several wild, martial airs, in which the singers stamp their feet in unison, throw out their arms, and generally mimic both the actions and the tones of voice of men engaged in battle. There are, of course, many

¹ The name given to the descendants of a mixed stock of slaves and others originally introduced into the Zambesi and Shiré valleys by the Portuguese.

obscene songs—for instance, the well-known “Chilangali” of the Wa-Yao, which they will often start out of pure devilry on approaching a native village or meeting a bevy of women on the road. No amount of poetic licence is capable of really shocking the feelings of any native in the smallest degree; and though the women will sometimes avert their heads, it is only to hide their giggles. As for Europeans, very few can understand the language of native songs, which is peculiarly difficult and quite unlike that of ordinary conversation. In fact, it is only by writing down the words separately that one can arrive at any idea of what they mean.

The musical instruments of the natives are not very numerous. One or two of those mentioned by the Rev. D. Macdonald and Sir Harry Johnston would seem to have disappeared from the country within the last few years. Drums are of several kinds, and range in size from little things which are carried under the armpit to the great drums of the Angoni, measuring perhaps three feet in length. These latter are conical in shape like an artillery shell, and widen from the bottom (which is only just broad enough to support them in an upright position) to the sounding surface, which may be 18 inches or more in diameter, and is formed by tightly stretching the skin of an ox or an antelope across the wooden walls of the instrument. The hair upon these skins may either be left intact or removed altogether, but is usually scraped away in parts only, so as to form curious patterns, which vary so much that I have

never seen any two exactly alike. The sides of the drum are closely laced with strips of twisted hide, to which the drumstick is attached by a leathern thong. The small instrument called *sansi* has a row, or sometimes two rows, of flat iron keys, which are fastened on a wooden board and struck with the thumb. There is another instrument with a very similar name, *sensi*. This is a sort of guitar which, according to the natives, has been recently introduced into the country from East Africa. It is made by fixing a gourd, from which the top has been removed, on to a long, flat, narrow piece of wood, from end to end of which the strings are fastened. I have two specimens of this instrument in my possession, one of which has a single string, while the other has three, made from twisted hide. These are manipulated with the fingers. Other stringed instruments, like the *kalirangwe*, are played either with the fingers, or with a plectrum or a bow of split bamboo.

CHAPTER XVI

NATIVE LIFE AND INDUSTRIES

My readers will remember that, in the classification which we have adopted with regard to early forms of government, the village community stands in the second place between the family on the one hand and the tribe on the other. The three stages are in truth perfectly distinct, yet in their close inter-resemblance we may see a striking illustration of the care with which evolution, even in politics, works towards its certain end. It would be no inaccurate definition of a village community to say that it was either an enlarged family or a miniature tribe, so closely does it partake of the nature of both. Generally speaking, large villages or aggregations of villages are more frequently met with in remote districts than in the neighbourhood of European centres like Zomba and Blantyre, a circumstance which may doubtless be traced to that disintegrating influence which the presence of white men always exercises on native communities. In the district of Zomba the largest village consists of only 210 huts, as against several of 1000 or more on the coasts of Nyasa. The total number of villages in Zomba containing over 100 huts apiece is

only seven, and the average of huts per village over the whole district is no more than 12 or 15 at most. This is not to say that Zomba is a thinly-populated region, but merely that the population is more or less evenly distributed, instead of being massed in considerable centres.

From the point of view of district government, such complete dispersion as this has serious drawbacks. The tribal body, as I have endeavoured to show, was intolerable to us, for a directly opposite reason. It was too large, too powerful, too aggressive to exist side by side with a European Administration, and accordingly it was dissolved. But in the Shiré Highlands the process of dissolution has gone a little too far—far enough, at any rate, to make it difficult and nearly impossible to carry out effectively the true theory of a Protectorate—viz. government through native chiefs. It is an ideal theory this, and yet I doubt whether it can be put into complete practice among people like the Central Africans. I do not think that anything can permanently arrest the tide of political decentralisation among them at the exact point which such a system requires. Once absolutely checked on their own lines of political development, these natives calmly abandon the whole business, and, while resigning supreme power to the European, take very good care not to relieve him of any part of the burden of trivial worries incidental to the situation. The tribe breaks up into large villages, the large villages into small ones, the small ones into mere groups of huts.

The tribal potentate becomes a petty headman, and reaps such advantage as he can from his position by throwing care to the winds. Ask him to take the least share of responsibility, and he will shrug his shoulders and smile. He has no longer any power, he says. The white man is chief now. The white man, therefore, must see to everything. There is at once a pathos, a logic, and an ironical humour about this attitude which only those can appreciate who have had to deal with it. The native has his revenge on us here, and knows that he has. I made frequent efforts when I was in Central Africa to form considerable villages in my district, to increase the influence of well-disposed and intelligent headmen, and to assign to them some active part in the management of ordinary native affairs; yet I always failed in my purpose, and it was the apathy of the headmen themselves that did most to thwart me. To proceed, however: each native hut may be reckoned as containing at least three persons, so that the average village includes, all told, some forty or fifty souls. These little assemblies are presided over by the aforementioned headmen or chiefs—*mfumu*, as they are still called.

A new village is formed ordinarily by the secession of one or more families from an older community. In former years permission to settle was given by the native chiefs, but now a further application is generally made either to the estate owner or to the Collector of the district, according as the land in question is held by a private individual or by the Crown. Once founded, a village

grows rapidly both by the marriage of the females, whose husbands settle in the homes of their brides, and by the adhesion of casual comers.

The village itself is built of course near the banks of a stream, the huts being irregularly disposed. In the centre there is nearly always a single tree, often of great size, about which for some little distance the ground is kept scrupulously clear of vegetation. These open areas are used both as meeting-places for the village parliaments and as playgrounds for the children. The huts themselves present but few examples of divergence from the beehive type, so universal through most parts of East, Central, and South Africa. Those of the Wankonde of North Nyasa are somewhat peculiar, sloping outward from the bottom like the sides of a hat-box. They are finished with some care, the floors being overlaid with a mixture of cow-dung and earth, trodden in many cases to a fine polish, while the framework of the walls is filled in with pellets of white clay, which gives them a very tidy appearance. Rectangular buildings occur round about every European centre, and are growing much commoner than they used to be, but the characteristic shape is still beyond question that of the beehive. These huts are constructed of bamboo, plastered roughly with mud, and topped by a heavy grass thatch which projects over a narrow verandah, and is there supported by stout poles. Everything is secured by lashings of bark rope only.¹

¹ The native never speaks of "building" a house, but of "tying it up"—(*"ku manga nyumba"*).



A NATIVE VILLAGE

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The walls of a hut are generally lower than the height of a man. The interior diameter may be 10 or 12 feet. There are no windows and no chimneys; no furniture except a few gourds, pipes, and cooking utensils; and no door, except an aperture which is closed at night by a bamboo hurdle. As a matter of fact, these huts are scarcely intended to be anything more than dormitories, and are rarely entered by their owners during the daytime. I should think that, even as sleeping-places, they must be rather stuffy when occupied, as constantly happens, by a man, his wife, and several children, plus a dog and perhaps several chickens, to say nothing of the rats which swarm under the thatch and rafters. A large wood fire, too, is kept burning practically all night, with atmospheric results which can be imagined. And yet it is wonderful how readily even a European, when thoroughly tired, can accommodate himself to one of these hovels. I have slept in scores of them at different times when travelling without a tent, and have always slept well; although, to be sure, since a white man requiring a hut is generally lodged in the best one available, his experience in this connection must of necessity be more or less incomplete.

With regard to means of communication, it is a great mistake to suppose, as many people do, that the interior of Africa is a trackless wilderness. On the contrary, every village is connected with the next by native paths, which the traveller need never leave, except, perhaps, when hunting.

These paths are very narrow, barely affording room for a march in single file. In dry weather they are hard and slippery ; in the wet season so disguised by grass and scrub as to be little better than blind ways. Moreover they meander to such a degree that a man may follow them for hundreds of miles, without ever proceeding in a perfectly straight line for 50 yards. Nevertheless, when viewed from a hill or other commanding position, it will be seen that they really lie pretty evenly between their extreme points, the frequent bends and turns being on such a small scale as to be almost unnoticeable from a distance. Why these trifling irregularities should exist at all may appear strange. The reason, however, is a simple one. No native will trouble himself to remove an obstacle from his path, however slight. It would take very little time, certainly, to get rid of such impedimenta as fallen trees, stones, or pools of water ; but, on the whole, it is a little easier to go round, so round the native goes, and those who follow him tread unhesitatingly in his footsteps. The tree is probably burnt in the next bush-fire or eaten by ants ; the stone crumbles to pieces and the pool dries up ; but the path remains permanently deflected, and, as similar divergences are created from time to time at other points, it soon assumes an exasperating and seemingly unaccountable indirectness along its whole course. One frequently notices a path in actual process of being thus turned aside, the old route remaining still faintly visible and bearing on its surface perhaps the

débris of the object which temporarily blocked it. We, whose highways are carried along the fixed lines of their survey with a fidelity which makes light of the most tremendous barriers, may well regard native methods with some passing wonder, not unmixed with contempt, pity, or envy as temperament and philosophy incline us; but at any rate nothing could more forcibly illustrate the difference between extremes of racial character than the picture thus conjured up—the European engineer forcing with incredible toil his broad and certain way, stemming rivers, draining marshes, shattering tons of earth and rock; and, on the other hand, the savage, careless of everything but the present, seeking only the readiest path, and content to let a pebble baulk him rather than stoop to lift it.

Outside the circle of huts come the gardens. In 1902¹ I estimated the total area under native cultivation in Zomba district to be some 20,000 acres; that is to say, 1 acre in 30, or about 2½ acres per hut of the population. The proportion borne to each other by the different crops I reckoned approximately as follows—

Maize (<i>chimanga</i>)	.	.	.	.	35 per cent.
Millet (<i>mapiira</i>)	.	.	.	.	25 " "
Cassava (<i>chinangwa</i>)	.	.	.	.	20 " "
Various	.	.	.	.	20 " "

Maize is the staple food of the people, and is eaten roasted or in the form of flour, a certain amount being also consumed while still green.

¹ District Report.

In the Lake districts a large quantity of cassava is grown, and also rice, the bulk of which comes from Kota-Kota in Marimba. There seems no reason, however, why rice should not do well in parts of the Shiré Highlands—notably in the marshy regions about Lake Chilwa.

The minor vegetable products found near every native settlement can scarcely be said to be cultivated in the strict sense of the word at all, being allowed to run practically wild in the bush, or between more important crops. There are several kinds of pumpkins, some of them very ornamental, with large grey-green leaves veined in white; beans in still greater variety; ground nuts (*ntesa*), cucumbers, sweet potatoes, tobacco, hemp, chillies, and so forth. Such things as onions, cabbages, and common potatoes are grown almost exclusively for sale to Europeans, among whom pine-apples and bananas also find a ready market. The pine-apples of the country, though rather coarse, have an excellent flavour. Bananas, requiring as they do scarcely any attention, are planted in large numbers, both for the sake of their fruit and for the shade afforded by their immense leaves. Latterly a few of the more well-to-do natives have attempted coffee-planting on a small scale, but hitherto without much success. In times of scarcity, when the regular crops have failed, the people will gather and eat many wild forms of vegetation, whole villages turning out into the woods for this purpose. The sickly-sweet fruit of the masuku (*Uapaco kirkiana*) is then in great request, as are also various fungi,

the roots of certain aquatic plants, and the young leaves of palms and other trees.

As for the system of farming adopted by the Central Africans, it is as follows. They first "betroth" the piece of land on which they intend to operate by planting stakes upon it, tying up wisps of grass, or marking it in some other way. Native custom puts no restriction on them in this matter, save that they may not tamper with ground already broken by another. Subject to this proviso, they are free to appropriate just as much as they please in any direction, without asking any man's leave or paying any tax or tribute whatever. The land having been thus selected and claimed, the trees growing upon it are hacked down right and left, until a rough clearing is formed, covered however with long stumps, for the native does not cut a tree close to the roots as an English woodman would do, but chooses a point two or three feet higher up which he can attack more easily. The fallen timber, together with the grass and bush, are next burned where they lie, the resulting ashes being employed to manure the soil, which is then lightly scratched by the women with their hoes. No further trouble is taken, nor any sort of attention paid to the ultimate interests of the land, the native's sole idea being to get as much as he can from it with the least possible expenditure of time and trouble. As each successive "garden" becomes sterilised, a new one is immediately formed beyond it by the same ruthless process, until, the zone of cultivation having been

pushed to an inconvenient distance from the village, the latter itself breaks up and its inhabitants migrate to some other neighbourhood. The harmfulness of such methods, although to a certain extent patent to everybody, cannot, I think, be fully realised except by such as have lived in countries like Central Africa. The deforestation of great tracts originally well wooded,¹ the exhaustion of a soil by nature exceedingly rich, are circumstances which, however we may deplore them, constitute the least serious of the evils brought about by this vicious and wanton policy. It is upon the natives themselves that it tells most heavily. Probably nothing in their history has done more to keep them down to the level of what they are, to stifle forethought, to nip energy, to perpetuate all that is thriftless and feeble in their characters. The same effect has followed the same nomadic habit wherever it has prevailed.

A writer on Indian topics² has expressed himself as follows about the style of agriculture which was practised in some parts of that country under the name of *koombree*, and which tallies very closely with the methods now current in Central Africa.

¹ By "deforestation" I mean the destruction of fine, slow-growing timber. It would be practically impossible to deforest Central Africa in the sense of reducing it to a desert waste, because many kinds of thin wiry trees spring up there wherever they can find room, and attain to maturity in a few years. Thanks to native agriculture, it is this sort of scrubby, worthless vegetation that covers the Protectorate to-day.

² E. N. G., *A Naturalist on the Prowl*.

"I said to myself: 'What can be the matter with this man? (the peasant farmer). His wants are as few as the wants of man can be, and his resources are many and almost boundless. Why is it that he does not prosper? . . . With the riches of nature so bountifully scattered about him, why should he be always poor? What has been his bane?' Something suggested *koombree*. To say that he has lived from time immemorial by *koombree*, what is it but to say that he has lived from time immemorial with no necessity for strenuous toil, or wise forethought, or anxious care? And the natural result is this poor creature Yelleep. If this be so, then his posterity may bless the day when a kind Government cut short the practice which he so cherishes, as the surgeon amputates a mortifying limb."

These remarks could never have been more strictly applicable to India than they are now to Central Africa. I do not know whether we shall ever succeed in getting the natives to realise and put into practice the idea of permanent title to land—possibly the right moment for the attempt has not yet come; but it is pretty certain that until they make some step in this direction, their general position in the scale of mind and morals will remain very much what it is at present.

Besides its crops, a village always possesses some live stock; a herd or two of goats perhaps, and a few broods of chickens or pigeons. Sheep, mostly of the fat-tailed variety, exist in small numbers. Cattle are more plentiful among the Angoni and the Wankonde than among the Wa-

Yao or the Anyanja. The finest trek oxen I have ever seen came from Mpeseni's Angoniland, but *the* pastoral people *par excellence* are the Wankonde, who are said to evince an affection for cattle resembling that of the Arabs for their horses. Many of the Angoni cattle are long-horned, but those of British Central Africa generally are of the humped type known in India as the Zebu. Both kinds came from abroad, the former from South Africa, the latter from the North. Indeed this is true not merely of the cattle, but of every domestic animal now found in the Protectorate, and of nearly all the agricultural crops too, the most important having been introduced by Arab, Portuguese, and British adventurers, to whom also is due the cultivation of such plants as are indigenous to the country. Sir Harry Johnston has justly laid emphasis upon this circumstance as being a remarkable one, and very characteristic of all the negro peoples. It certainly says little for their enterprise, and suggests the question, "How did they live before such things as maize and millet were brought to their doors?" By hunting doubtless, as they partly continued to do for a long time afterwards—in fact, until a foreign government established itself among them, and, by restrictions in the shape of game regulations, licences, and so forth, made the chase, as a means of livelihood, nearly impossible. Under their own laws the hunter was in the same enviable position as the farmer. Permission to kill game or fish was usually asked from the local chief, to whom also a certain

proportion of the spoil (as, *e.g.*, the ground tusk in the case of elephants) was understood to be due; but, apart from this, a man was as free to range the woods or net the waters¹ as to hoe the earth or build a house.

A certain amount of hunting and poaching still goes on among natives, but few or none of them make a regular business of it now.² Also their methods have changed very much, owing both to the introduction of firearms and to the aforementioned rules and regulations designed by Government for the protection of wild life. Co-operative hunting, as it may be called—that is to say, hunting carried on by large parties of armed men, attended by dogs—is now quite a thing of the past. The terribly destructive trap formed by fences radiating from a huge central pit, into which the game was driven from distances to be reckoned by miles, is a fair example of the scale upon which these operations used to be conducted. Livingstone, Cotton Oswell, and others have vividly described the nearly similar device which, under the name of “hopo,” was formerly employed by the tribes living south of the Zambesi. It is easy, or perhaps I should say it is difficult, to

¹ As far as fishing is concerned, there are still no restrictions, European or otherwise.

² The New Regulations (see Appendix) which have been adopted by almost every European Power having territory in Africa, and which make it a criminal offence to buy or sell the heads, horns, skins, etc. of certain beasts, will no doubt further discourage the natives from pursuing game. Just before these Regulations were issued, there was a considerable and increasing traffic between native poachers and European traders and others in these so-called “sporting trophies.”

picture the fearful massacres which must have taken place when these great drives were completed, and whole herds of antelopes, buffaloes, zebra, and other wild animals were forced, struggling and kicking, into the terminal pit, there to be trampled to death by their fellows or speared by the pursuing natives. The elephant was also hunted on co-operative lines, something like those followed by the toreadors of Spain, one or two men engaging the beast's attention in front, while others, coming up repeatedly from both sides, flung their heavy spears by scores into its body. Often, however, elephants were captured by pitfalls, covered with brushwood ; and the hippopotamus, besides being harpooned, was done to death by the well-known falling spear-trap suspended across his path. An old native once told me that cow elephants were much more frequently taken in pitfalls than were bulls, a thing which struck me as somewhat unaccountable, until, in one of the late Sir Samuel Baker's books, I happened to see the same statement recorded and explained. According to Sir Samuel, the cows are more readily entrapped because, in their anxiety for the safety of their calves, they throw their trunks continually into the air, so as to be able to scent any approaching danger, while the bulls, troubled by no such consideration, carry their trunks low, and are thus enabled to detect the presence of pitfalls with wonderful certainty. A servant of mine on one occasion fell bodily into an elephant-pit, while chasing a reedbuck which I had wounded at a place called Matete

in the West Nyasa district. This particular pit was an old one and had no covering, but was more or less screened by grass² growing about its edges. Although partially filled up, it must have been quite 12 or 13 feet deep. Fortunately it had no stakes at the bottom, and beyond a fright and a severe shaking, the man, who was afterwards pulled out by the aid of bark-ropes, escaped unhurt. The larger felidæ (lions and leopards), when their depredations became intolerable, were usually despatched either by a spear-trap or by poison,¹ but were not often attacked openly.

Besides the methods thus practised against large and dangerous game, nets were and are still used in many parts of the country for hunting the lesser kinds of buck, especially bushbuck, while a variety of ingenious devices are employed to capture birds and small mammals. But traps and snares now take quite a secondary place as engines of destruction, all natives greatly preferring firearms. The number of these has considerably diminished of late years, owing to confiscations following on the establishment of licences, and other measures designed to regulate the possession and use of arms ; but until quite recently there were half-a-dozen or so of flintlock

¹ To kill a wild animal by poison requires greater care than might be supposed. The knife, used to cut the meat which it is intended to poison, should first be dug several times into soft earth, so as to remove any suspicious odour. It is also important not to put down too much meat ; for if this is done, the beast that comes to it will probably gorge himself to excess, and afterwards vomit his meal, poison and all.

or percussion guns to nearly every village, and some of these are still retained by their owners under regular licences, although it is scarcely possible that they can do much execution with weapons so antiquated. Some are Tower muskets, marked G. R. on the sideplates, and having the words "42nd Regt." engraved on the breech end of the barrels. Others are of a much older pattern, some being so cracked and unstable that it would require unusual hardihood on the part of a European to discharge them at all. The natives, however, are wholly reckless in such matters. A native hunter of my acquaintance had a percussion gun of the earliest type, the barrel of which, deeply pitted by rust and worn down to a perilous thinness, was simply *tied* on to the flimsy stock by waxed string and brass wire. Yet with this rickety tube he had slain, so he informed me, elephants, buffaloes, lions, and all sorts of game ; and with such confidence did he regard it that he literally thought nothing of cramming down its poor old muzzle charges of powder which might have tried the toughness of modern Whitworth steel. Occasionally one happens upon really curious and interesting weapons in native villages. I once found, in a hut not far from the Portuguese frontier in Mlanje district, a beautifully-chased flintlock fowling-piece, much knocked about, and minus the greater part of its woodwork, which still bore on its sideplate, in letters perfectly legible, some initials which I forget, and after them the name of a great historic family of France. I wondered how

such a thing could possibly have found its way into a part of Africa, separated by thousands of miles from the nearest French territory, and never visited until quite recently by any French traveller. Most probably the gun had come by sale or otherwise into the hands of some Portuguese trader or adventurer, and had by him been bartered to the natives long ago for ivory or slaves. I bought it from its then owner, a villainous-looking and extremely dirty old man, for half-a-crown; but, on quitting the district, I stupidly mislaid it, and, to my regret, have never been able to recover it since. The marksmanship of the natives is almost invariably very poor; in fact, I never knew a Bantu negro who could make sure of hitting anything more than 40 or 50 yards away.¹ At the same time they are exceedingly clever and patient stalkers, and are generally much better versed than white men in observing the habits of wild game, concerning which, if their confidence can be gained, they will often tell most interesting stories.

We have seen now that the native relies for food principally upon his crops, which furnish him with his monotonous daily dish of *msima* (porridge), and to a lesser extent on his live stock, and on wild game and fish; but he supplements his ordinary fare whenever he can by various relishes (*mboga*), which may consist either of roots, tubers, etc., or of such things as rats, mice, beetles, ants,

¹ I must except some of the native soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Battalions King's Own African Rifles, who have been trained to shoot uncommonly well at targets.

or locusts. On Lake Nyasa, again, certain small flies, which make their appearance from time to time in vast numbers, are caught, dried in the sun, and pounded up into cakes. Millet or maize beer (*moa : pombey*) is drunk at all dances and festivals, and an exceedingly refreshing, non-alcoholic beverage is made by mixing the acid pulp of the baobab fruit with water.

As for arts, manufactures, industries, little variety or beauty need be looked for in this direction, seeing that the principle which the native constantly holds in view is the avoidance of superfluous æsthetic detail and the reduction of indispensable adjuncts to their rudest and least enduring forms. It is difficult for a European, travelling with perhaps 1000 lbs. weight of expensive stores and accoutrements, not to experience at times some sense of humiliation, some passing doubt as to whether civilisation is really worth all that it costs, when he sees, demonstrated in the life and surroundings of the savage, how absurdly limited are the real needs of existence, and with how pathetically little it is possible for human creatures to be content. As Duff Macdonald well remarks of the Central Africans, "their circumstances are easy, not because their gratifications are many, but because their wants are few." Generally speaking, the native aims at supplying himself as directly as possible from his Mother Earth; and when he finds any natural object which will suit his purpose, however rudely, he adopts it at once, either just as it is, or with such slight alterations as may be

absolutely necessary, thus reducing the trouble of manufacture to a minimum. Does he require a drinking-cup? He takes a fallen gourd and cuts off the top. A tobacco-pipe? He gets him another sort of gourd, curiously shaped like a large hour-glass, and inserts a reed into the side of it. A pillow? He picks one of the hard, oblong fruits of the sausage-tree.¹ Wisps of grass, or strips of bark, or the leaves of palms roughly twisted and knotted together provide him with ropes. His purse is either a fold of his own loin-cloth, or the skin of some small mammal, generally a civet or genet. The mortar in which his wives pound their meal is simply the section of a tree scooped out to the requisite depth, while a large log similarly hollowed serves him for a canoe. Each family makes what it wants. There are no specialists, for division of labour is an idea at which these people have not yet arrived, except in so far that some things are habitually manufactured by men and others by women. The latter, for instance, are responsible for the pottery, which, though plain enough in shape and finish, exhibits very pleasing tones of colour, ranging from pale terra-cotta to lustrous browns and blacks. Baskets are of various kinds, but are always neatly and firmly plaited. The *nchengwa* and the *mtanga* are the commonest; the former a shallow, saucer-shaped vessel, the latter deeper

¹ Pillows are also made of wood, and tobacco-pipes either of wood or clay. Some of these pipes have two bowls set one behind the other like the funnels of a steamboat. The mouth-pieces are not flattened, but perfectly circular, and so large that a European at any rate would find them very inconvenient.

and nearly cylindrical. Another basket, used as a receptacle for beer or water, is formed like a flagon, with four stumpy feet, and is plastered with some black, adhesive, moisture-proof composition. Cloth was formerly made from cotton and also from hammered bark, the process in both cases being exceedingly slow and tedious, but these fabrics have been universally superseded within the last few years by cheap European calicoes, and are now rarely or never seen except in remote districts. Wood-carving is practised to some extent, the scabbards of knives, the stems and bowls of pipes, the handles of musical instruments and other articles being often roughly ornamented in this way. These slight decorations, together with the use of an oxide glaze on their pottery and the chipping and staining of some of their basket-work, seem to be almost the only concession which they make to æsthetics in the manufacture of articles, other than those intended for personal adornment or for sale to Europeans. Among the latter, mention must be made of their rather elaborately carved ebony walking-sticks, and quaint wooden dolls and figures of birds and beasts. It is, however, as workers in metal that the Central Africans show to best advantage ; and really, considering the lack of facilities, much of their work is very creditable. The material which they use is not, as a rule, dug by them from the earth, but is bought, stolen, or otherwise obtained from traders, travellers, etc., in the shape of leaden bullets, brass wire, telegraph wire, the blades of knives, the locks and barrels of

old muskets, and any other such odds and ends as may fall in their way.

Some impetus, no doubt, was² given to metal work by the absolute necessity, which prevailed until quite recent times, of possessing reliable arms of offence. Incredibly lazy as are African savages, they recognise clearly enough the difference between things which make for mere comfort and convenience and those which are demanded by the imperative instinct of self-preservation. For the former they care nothing at all, holding probably that the leisure gained by disregarding them is in itself the truest comfort. Even to the latter they vouchsafe, in a certain sense, little heed, living from hand to mouth, and exposing themselves to all sorts of risks from sheer *insouciance* and hatred of exertion. But against dangers which, like those of war, threaten life with peculiar directness and violence, even these careless creatures bestir themselves to make provision; and so it is that we constantly find primitive races having weapons of a superior kind, strong, delicate, well-balanced, well-wrought, while contenting themselves at the same time with agricultural and household implements degraded almost below the level of prehistoric eras.

Perhaps the finest spears come from the North End of Lake Nyasa, but the assegais of the Angoni are graceful weapons, and very deadly ones too within a certain limited range. The heads of these assegais are generally of iron, two-edged, tapering to a moderately-fine point, and are often furnished with a series of sharp, twisted

barbs. A socket of leather fastens the blade to the wooden shaft, which is plumed at the upper end with the long^b black and white hair of goats or other animals. The extreme top of the shaft is bound with spiral coils of copper, brass or iron, while the heavy game-spears have, in addition, a sort of wedge of metal fixed in the handle-tip, this being used, I am told, for digging out the tusks of elephants, the teeth of hippos, etc.

As for defensive arms, the Shiré tribes do not appear to use shields, or at any rate not of a pattern peculiar to themselves. The large Angoni shields closely resemble those of their kinsmen the Southern Zulus, being made of undressed ox or antelope hide, cut to an oval shape, and ornamented down the midrib with numerous small loops of leather, through the back of which a stout stick is driven to serve as a handle. The Wankonde of North Nyasa manufacture shields of a very singular type, about four feet long and not more than eight or ten inches wide, the edges being slightly recurved. These shields are of hide or wood, the latter being scraped and painted with black stripes like the coat of a zebra. It is difficult to say why such a pattern should have been adopted, since the protective surface is too narrow, one would think, to be of much practical use against pointed weapons such as spears and arrows, which are the ordinary implements of savage warfare in Nyasaland. My own theory is, that these Wankonde shields are carried merely to ward off blows from the sticks and knobkerries used in ordinary village squabbles, and are not

intended for serious hostilities, to which the timid Wankonde people have always been strongly averse.

Axes and knives are made in different sizes from hammered iron, the latter being fixed in hafts of ivory, or bone, or wood, and having sheaths of wood or leather. Little knives about three inches long are frequently offered for sale as curios, and these have both the handle and sheath curiously carved and sometimes encrusted with beadwork. For purely decorative purposes brass is more used than any other metal. The light wrist-bangles called *Inganda*, which one constantly sees among the Wa-Yao and the Anyanja, are made by bending two or three strands of brass wire into a circle, so as to form a central core or rib, over which more wire is carefully and firmly twisted, the edges of the coils being brought so close together as to touch one another. The Wankonde wear belts made in exactly the same way, of brass or copper. The ponderous *Makan-gala* bracelets of the Wa-Yao are of solid brass, and are worn higher up on the arm than the *Inganda*. The nose-buttons of the Yao women are almost the only ornaments in the country which are made of lead—probably from melted bullets. Goldsmiths' work can hardly be reckoned as an industry of the Protectorate, for it is carried on exclusively by the natives inhabiting the Lower Shiré and Zambesi valleys, who were originally instructed in this art by the Portuguese.

With regard to sports and pastimes, although the natives take readily enough to European

games, especially those of the rougher kind, such as hockey and football, they have very few which are peculiar to themselves. I must, however, except a sort of handball, which is so popular with them as to be in some sense a national amusement ; and a curious sedentary game for two, which consists in moving pebbles from one hole to another, these holes being either made in a wooden board or merely scooped out of the earth. Bent, who attributes this game to Arab influence, remarks that nearly similar forms of it obtain in South and West Africa and at Singapore. It is said that no white man has ever succeeded in discovering exactly how it is played, a statement which I can readily believe. A game of cards, similarly unintelligible to Europeans, is common, and is made the subject of much petty gambling. The kings and knaves are called after local celebrities, and it is most amusing to hear the players excitedly shouting well-known names like " Jonsen " (Johnston), " Makanani " (Buchanan), the while they produce their winning cards.

CHAPTER XVII

NATIVE RITES AND CUSTOMS

BEFORE turning to such topics as the modern administration of justice in Central Africa, and other important matters connected with the government of that country by Europeans, I propose to consider shortly a few of the laws, customs, and ceremonies which used to obtain among the tribes, and of which some, by reason of their barbarity, have been abolished, while others of a milder nature, touching civil contracts and every-day incidents of native life, still remain very much what they were. These latter are both numerous and, as a rule, faithfully observed, the whole career of a native being in fact much more closely hedged about by convention than many people suppose.

Betrothal.—One of the very earliest events in the life of an African infant is its betrothal. Its matrimonial future may even be made the subject of negotiations before its birth, and, in the case of a girl at any rate, is nearly always settled within a few months of that occasion, the *fiancé* being generally a boy of tender years. The matter is arranged through the instrumentality of

a go-between, who, for a consideration, undertakes to approach the parents of the child whose hand is sought. Little diplomacy is, however, needed in these transactions, which resolve themselves into mere bargains, the successful applicant being the first who can offer, or whose father can offer for him, the particular value which happens to be put upon the bride. So soon as this point has been settled, the youthful suitor makes a present of cloth to his betrothed, and the contract is then regarded as complete and binding, the affianced children being encouraged to look upon each other from that time forth as future husband and wife.

Inyago.—The next important ceremony to which Central African children are submitted is that of initiation (*Inyago*), which occurs about the time of puberty, and is intended as a formal introduction to the mysteries and responsibilities of adult life, with special reference to the sexual relations. Among the Anyanja (and I believe some other tribes as well) this rite is practised only in the case of girls. The Wa-Yao make their male children pass through a nearly similar ordeal, but even with them the boys and girls are separately initiated, and the respective ceremonies seem to be considered as on a somewhat different footing, for the boys' *Inyago* can properly be held only at the village and under the patronage, so to say, of the paramount chief of the neighbourhood, whereas the girls' initiation may take place under the auspices of an inferior headman. This distinction is still jealously observed, and

any breach of the chief's privilege is apt to lead to bitter disputes. Towards the ceremony of Inyago generally, as towards all 'their more mysterious practices, the attitude of modern natives is oddly compounded of veneration and shame. To Europeans they will always pretend to make light of the matter, hanging their heads and giggling whenever it is mentioned. Nevertheless among themselves they still hold it in serious regard as a quasi-religious institution, marking an important epoch in life, the putting away of childish things and the assumption of grave responsibilities and duties. As might be supposed, the preparations for such a rite are on a considerable scale, especially in the matter of food and drink, which are compounded beforehand in large quantities for the delectation of crowds of visitors from the neighbouring villages. The actual celebration begins at new moon, the children being then taken away into the forest, where they remain in temporary shelters for about a month. During this time the ceremony of initiation is performed, in the case of boys by a man, in the case of girls by a woman. The privacy of the celebrants is always most strictly guarded, and an intruder is liable to be violently assaulted and beaten, the boys being actually provided with clubs for that purpose. On this account, and also because of the reluctance of natives generally to discuss such things before Europeans, it is not easy to find out precisely what takes place at these meetings, beyond the fact that the children receive a great deal of

advice on the subject of domestic duties, and are completely enlightened as to the nature of the sexual relations. The boys on their part are circumcised, and, as though to emphasise the grave and irrevocable nature of the change which they have undergone, a new name is bestowed on them. That which they have hitherto borne is at the same time relinquished for ever, and so strongly do natives feel on this point, that whoever addresses an initiated person by the name of his childhood is held to have offered him thereby serious and almost deadly provocation.

Another Inyago is observed when a young woman becomes pregnant for the first time. This is in the nature of an assembly of matrons, all males except the husband of the pregnant wife, and all women who have not themselves borne children, being excluded from participation in the proceedings, which, like those of the earlier Inyago, are characterised by dances of a more or less licentious kind, and by the bestowal of much advice touching marital questions.

The observance of such rites is by no means confined to Nyasaland. Similar practices obtain in various parts of West and South Africa, nor, I think, despite outward absurdities, is pathos wholly wanting to these clumsy attempts at instruction. Putting aside the tawdry accessories—the drums, the beer, the oil and ochre, the rattles and cats' tails, the indecent songs and dances—there remains a large substratum of honest purpose in the counsel given to those who offer themselves for initiation. These ceremonies re-

present all that the poor arrested mind of the savage can contrive in the way of enlightening his children; all that he can teach them of the mystery of life—a poor equipment surely, yet not altogether despicable, in so far as it stands for a certain rude concept of parental duty.

Marriage.—Besides infant betrothals, which I have already mentioned, a wife may be procured in various other ways, as, *e. g.*, by capture, inheritance, or purchase. Marriage by capture, formerly very prevalent, has been practically abolished within the Protectorate and adjoining territories by the suppression of inter-tribal warfare; but the transfer of widows to the heirs of their deceased husbands still obtains, while marriage by purchase or by a mixed system of purchase and courtship is now the commonest method of adding to a harem. The number of wives to each man among the Wa-Yao varies from one, two, or three with ordinary villagers up to thirty or forty in the case of considerable chiefs. The precise total, however, fluctuates slightly according to the circumstances of the husband. If these become straitened so that he cannot afford to buy calico for all his wives, or to pay taxes to the Government for their huts, some of them may leave him by mutual arrangement, and either return to their relatives or contract other alliances. Occasionally also inferior wives are handed over as a gift by one man to another. As to the method of procedure in the case of marriage by purchase, it is not unlike that of child-betrothal. In both the go-between or guarantor (Angoswi)

figures conspicuously. This functionary, as a rule, is nearly related to the contracting parties, on whose behalf he assumes high responsibility, not only acting as an accredited representative in simple preliminary negotiations, but (in the case of the wife, at any rate) coming forward as a mediator should any subsequent trouble arise. Thus, if a married woman be charged with a serious offence against one other than her husband, recourse is had, not to the latter, nor to the woman personally, but to her guarantor, who watches the case in her interest. If she be found guilty the guarantor pays a fine on her account, and similarly if the accusation be disproved a fine is paid to him by the prosecutors. Between husband and wife the powers and duties of the guarantor seem to be more limited, but even here an important part is assigned to him. He it is who in the first place certifies that the woman is free to marry, and that no other man has a claim upon her. Should this statement turn out to be false, he must bear the chief responsibility. On the death of a husband, again, the guarantor is required to look after the wife and her property if she be possessed of any, while in the event of a separation it is to him that the discarded bride returns.

There is not among the people of Southern Nyasaland and the Shiré Highlands anything which can properly be called a nuptial ceremony; that is to say, the day of marriage is marked by no formal rite, nor by any organised rejoicings. The preliminaries having been settled

as already described, the husband simply builds a hut in the village of his bride, who, as soon as it is ready, enters and sets about her new duties. Sir H. Johnston¹ mentions that among the Atonga of West Nyasa newly-wedded bridegrooms have to comply with a most singular requirement, by way of proving their fitness for the conjugal state, but I have never heard of any similar custom among the Shiré tribes.

Marriage Laws.—As regards native marriage laws, they are simple enough in themselves, but since the Protectorate has been established and the people have taken to referring their connubial as well as other differences to Collectors of districts, the whole question has become rather confused; and decisions on identical points may vary a great deal, according as the presiding magistrate adheres strictly to the native point of view, or inclines to put a conventional, civilised interpretation on the matter. Roughly speaking, native custom expects the husband to maintain his wife in clothes (at a cost of perhaps 3s. per annum!), to build the hut in which they are to live, to pay the Government tax on it, and generally to protect his spouse and treat her with reasonable consideration. The woman's duties are much more arduous. It is her business to see to the plastering of the hut (after her husband has erected the framework), and she it is who must draw the water, gather the firewood, carry the loads, pound the corn, cook the food, and brew the beer of the household. She also does practi-

¹ *British Central Africa*, p. 414.

cally all the agricultural work, though her husband may help her to hoe occasionally if he has no other wives. Persistent neglect of any of the above responsibilities may lead to a separation. The husband may also discard his wife if all her children die, or if she prove to be of a quarrelsome disposition. Adultery on the part of the woman was formerly visited in many or most cases with torture and death, the seducer also being liable, on apprehension, to be killed, or kept in slavery, or held up to a heavy ransom; but under British rule milder ideas have been introduced touching such offences, which are now certainly regarded by the natives with greater indifference than they used to be.

Illness and Death.—There are many ceremonies in connection with these. When a native falls sick, the usual presumption is that he has been bewitched, and recourse is had to some professional medicine-man, who does what he can to counteract the malevolent agency by special charms of his own. It is true that various drugs compounded from leaves, roots, bark, etc. are largely used in cases of ordinary sickness, but the idea uppermost in the native mind is that such cases are due to witchcraft, and that the patient can only recover by the aid of some magic superior to that of his enemy. Violent accidents, wounds received in battle, and similar mishaps, are regarded as on a different footing, being generally recognised as something akin to what we should call "acts of God," and if death result from these it excites little comment or suspicion. But if a

man perish in consequence of alleged witchcraft, the most intense excitement prevails, and steps are at once taken to expose the witch.

This brings us to the consideration of a fetish, which until recently was the bane of every Central African village, and to which many thousands of innocents were annually sacrificed—a practice as weird and terrible as any that have disappeared from the country, or that can be cited from the records of travellers in other parts of the world. I refer to the ordeal by muavi poison, the belief in which, though studiously concealed from white men, and not nearly so often put into practice as formerly, is still very firm and universal even among those natives who have lived long in the neighbourhood of European centres. If we reflect that almost every case of death from fever, pneumonia, or any other common disease was attributed to witchcraft and followed by the administration of muavi to the person suspected, and if we also consider the large proportion which deaths from disease—even in the wildest country—bear to the sum-total of mortality, then we can form some idea of the hecatombs of victims which this single superstition must have gathered to itself in Central Africa. Nor let it be forgotten that muavi was employed in trials for murder, theft, rape, and other crimes as well as for witchcraft. The Rev. Duff Macdonald estimates that in his time not less than one-half of the native population of Central Africa died in this manner; and though strict measures have been taken by the British Administration to

suppress muavi, there is little doubt that here and there a few persons perish by it still. Of course trial by ordeal has obtained at different times and under different forms among all nations; but what makes the muavi fetish so peculiarly corrupt is the circumstance that ultimate decision, instead of being left to blind chance, as in the ordeal by water, or to superior courage and address, as in the knightly ordeal by combat, is really vested in two persons—the witch detective (mavumbula) and the poison-mixer—who are in league with each other.

The method of detection employed by the “mavumbula” is to feel the hands of the company, who stand round him in a ring. His appearance is rendered hideously impressive by the usual insignia of his calling—by paint and grease on his face and breast, by feathers in his hair, and by cats’-tails and rattles hung about his waist and limbs. As he moves he sings unceasingly a mystic chant; but on touching the hand of a guilty person, he springs suddenly backward, with frantic yells and every demonstration of excitement and horror. If the trial be for witchcraft, the “horns” of the detected one (which have been secretly buried by the mavumbula some time before) are publicly dug up, and with this culminating proof exposure is complete, and the unfortunate who has been singled out—generally some poor half-witted wretch—is led away among the execrations of the bystanders to almost certain death. This process of “detection,” however, is sometimes rendered unnecessary, for

a particular individual may be accused beforehand by his neighbours, and, if innocent, will probably offer himself for ordeal of his own free will, so confident does he then feel that he will survive the poison and triumph over his accusers. Generally speaking, the administration of muavi after detection by the mavumbula always proves fatal, because a contrary result would imply that the mavumbula had made a mistake, and would thus injure his professional reputation. In other cases the issue is determined by circumstances. Muavi poison is made from the bark of a tree, and depends for its effect on the proportions in which it is mixed, the person to whom it is given either vomiting it, in which event he suffers no particular harm, or else retaining it and dying in consequence. The witch-detectives and poison-compounders are perfectly aware of this fact and take advantage of it accordingly, bestowing a fatal dose whenever they think that their prestige will be advanced thereby, or whenever they have a private spite to indulge, and cunningly sparing a subject now and then—either because they have been heavily bribed, or in order to invest their proceedings with an air of impartiality and good faith. The position of these men—and women, for the office does not seem to be exclusively appropriated by either sex—is much strengthened by the fact that they form in some sense a hereditary caste, each handing on the secrets and paraphernalia of the trade to his or her successor, usually a near relative, on whom the mantle of divination is thus supposed to descend.

So much at any rate for these cynical high-priests and priestesses. The natives in general, on the other hand, cherish, as I have said, a strong faith in the efficacy of muavi as a sure indicator of innocence or guilt, and regard the ceremony of its administration as an act of quasi-religious significance. It is of course precisely abuses of this kind which die hardest under European rule, and which to the last are most jealously fostered by the very people who suffer from them—witness practices like that of suttee in India. Nevertheless the muavi fetish is every year losing its hold upon the natives of Central Africa, and no doubt will soon disappear from the country altogether, though it is probable that its ultimate abolition will be due less to repressive legislation than to the gradual spread of enlightenment among the people, whereby this terrible superstition will assuredly be brought into the ridicule and discredit which have already overtaken so many ancient customs.

Burial of the Dead.—The right of sepulture is accorded with some discrimination. Persons who have succumbed to muavi are denied it, their bodies being torn to pieces and burnt. Apparently suicides are also excluded. I once saw the skeleton of a man, wrapped in a piece of bark-cloth and wedged in the branches of a tree, and was told by some natives who were with me that the individual whose remains had been thus singularly disposed of must have taken his own life. However, suicides are so very uncommon in Central Africa that I cannot say positively

whether their bodies are habitually treated in this way or not. The ordinary rites of mourning and burial among the Shiré tribes, are as follows. Immediately upon the advent of death piteous cries break from the female relatives of the deceased, and swell in volume as other mourners arrive on the scene, until the whole village resounds with lamentations, punctuated at intervals by the sharp report of firearms. The mourners shave their heads, or cover them with flour, or tie strips of twisted straw or cloth round their limbs, according to the custom of the tribe to which they belong. The corpse, having been carefully washed and arrayed in calico, is finally enveloped in a grass-mat and slung hammock-wise upon a pole, the projecting ends of which serve as handles for the carriers. About two or three days after the occurrence of death the funeral procession starts. It is heralded by the sound of drums and much mournful singing, but, though usually numerous, does not include the near relatives of the deceased, nor is anybody allowed to accompany it who has not been initiated at the ceremony of Inyago. So soon as a convenient spot has been reached, hoes are produced, and the grave is dug there and then. I have only once had occasion to exhume the body of a native, when I found the grave to be about five feet deep, with a sort of side chamber at the bottom in which the remains rested.¹ The Wa-Yao bend

¹ The body was that of a murdered man. Ordinarily the corpse, enveloped (as already described) in a mat and slung on a pole, is lowered until the ends of the pole catch in two forked

the knees of their dead, but the Anyanja bury them with the legs straight. Over the grave tiers of plastered mud are laid, and on top of this is built a small hut, often covered with white calico. Some of the personal property of the deceased is entombed with him—his drinking and cooking pots perhaps, and his pipe, together with a handful of beads ; but, in order to render these articles useless to a thief, they are always broken beforehand. A few years since, such things as pots and beads were not all that accompanied a man to his last resting-place. In pre-Administration times, when every considerable headman owned a certain number of slaves, whole batches of these unfortunates were butchered in their master's honour, or even cast living into his grave, so that on the other side of that mysterious portal he might not miss those humble dependents whose presence had been familiar to him on earth.

Once committed to the tomb, the African dead are left as much as possible alone. Offerings may be presented to them, but they are visited for no other purpose, while the houses in which they lived are completely pulled to pieces and consumed by fire, the very sites being looked upon thereafter as forbidden ground. Often even the crops of a deceased person are rooted up and destroyed.

Inheritance and Succession.—Native law with

sticks, one at each extremity of the grave, which is then filled with earth.

regard to these is somewhat peculiar—a man's heirs being, not his sons, but his brothers according to seniority ; and failing them, the sons of his eldest sister in a similar order. The reason given by the Wa-Yao for this arrangement is intelligible enough. "A man's reputed sons," they argue, "may not really be his children at all ; but the offspring of his sister must certainly have some of the family blood in his veins." As for property, a native rarely leaves much behind him, but whatever there is goes to the legal heir, subject to deductions for funeral and other expenses. The wives of the deceased form part of the inheritance of his successor. Nothing in the nature of a will is ever attempted even by verbal instruction, nor, I fancy, would the wishes of a moribund stand the least chance of being respected, should they differ from what custom has sanctioned.

CHAPTER XVIII

CRIME AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

It need hardly be said that the ancient criminal laws of the Central Africans, framed, as all savage legislation is framed, on a basis of terror, have been, for the most part, either tacitly abolished or so modified in practice as to bring them into unison with the altered state of the country and with the ordinary requirements of humanity. Beyond this, however, there has been little interference on our part, and justice is now meted out by Collectors of districts after a decidedly patriarchal fashion, more in accord with local custom and their own discretion than with any rigid judicial standard. Thus we have the remarkable spectacle of a score or so of Englishmen, who have received no special legal training at home, administering, in a most intimate and homely way, the affairs of nearly a million human beings of a totally different race, whose own laws, highly peculiar in themselves, have either fallen into desuetude or have been thrown into a state of flux by the sudden transfer of power from their own chiefs to the alien government.

It is true that capital sentences, and sentences

of imprisonment for a term of years, when passed by a Collector on a native, are submitted in the first place to a professional lawyer (the Judge of the High Court), and thereafter to H. M. Commissioner, but in all other cases—in all those cases, that is to say, which are of constant occurrence in the lives of natives—the authority of the Collector in his own district is supreme and his decision final.

It would not be unnatural, perhaps, for persons unacquainted with Central Africa to suppose that a scheme of justice thus constituted might have in it certain elements of danger; yet there is probably no direction in which the Protectorate Government works more satisfactorily than in this. I am not talking, be it understood, of lawsuits between Europeans, or in which Europeans are involved. These occupy a totally different position; and calling, as they do, for knowledge which only a trained lawyer can possess, are now very properly relegated to the immediate jurisdiction of the High Court. But where natives alone are concerned, the judicial code can hardly be too simple or its administration too direct. The district magistrates, living as they do in closest contact with the people under their charge, may fairly be presumed to know more about them than anybody else, and to this extent at any rate their judgments merit the respect due to expert opinion. Moreover, the one reform really needed was introduced some time ago by a Regulation which provides that all such magistrates, in order to render themselves eligible for promotion, must

pass a qualifying examination in one of the two principal native languages.¹

The dialects of Central Africa are very numerous, all the principal tribes employing forms of speech markedly, though not, I believe, radically distinct from each other. Ki-Swahili is the polite tongue, and stands towards purely local languages in much the same relation as French used to stand towards the other languages of Europe. Although corrupt Arabic enters to some extent into its composition, the basis of Ki-Swahili is pure Bantu; and, owing to this circumstance, it is more or less understood over the whole of the immense tracts that lie between the Zambesi and the sources of the Nile. It is, I believe, a lucid, precise, and copious tongue, not difficult to master, and well fitted to convey a variety of ideas with clearness and dignity; but in British Central Africa a knowledge of it is far from being indispensable.

The real home of Ki-Swahili is Zanzibar, and its head-quarters in the Protectorate may be said to be at Kota-Kota in the district of Marimba, where the "Wali" or agent of the Sultan of Zanzibar had his residence for many years. It is spoken to a certain extent all along the coasts of Lake Nyasa, and by the more progressive and intelligent natives in every part of the country,

¹ Chi-Nyanja and Ki-Swahili. Since this was written, however, a Regulation has been passed making Chi-Nyanja alone the compulsory language both for civil and military officers, but encouraging the study of Ki-Swahili by providing a bonus for proficiency in that tongue. Independent effect has thus been given to the views expressed in this chapter.

but it is emphatically *not* the speech of the common "jungli" people; and since my dealings have been mainly with the latter (who, after all, constitute at least nine-tenths of the whole population), I have never studied Ki-Swahili, and have never felt myself at any particular disadvantage in consequence. Indeed, I am disposed to think that Chi-Nyanja, despite its unquestionable inferiority, has a much better claim to be considered the *lingua franca* of the country; for, while there are hundreds of villages where Ki-Swahili is practically unknown, Chi-Nyanja is everywhere readily understood, as well by the educated native as by the raw savage, and will prove equally useful among the tribes of the Lower Shiré Valley, the Wa-Yao and Anyanja of the Shiré Highlands, the Atonga of Bandawe and Nkata, and even the Angoni, with most of whom, when I was in Mombera's territory, I found that I could converse in Chi-Nyanja almost as easily as with the people of Zomba and Mlanje.

On this account, and also because it is easier to learn than Chi-Yao (the other principal language of the Shiré districts), I should certainly recommend anybody coming to Central Africa to make himself acquainted first of all with Chi-Nyanja, by whatever dialects he may afterwards choose to supplement it.

And here let me remark that the only way to acquire an accurate and serviceable knowledge of any native tongue is to go out into the bush and mix with the villagers there, hunting with them, it may be, and drawing them into conversation at

every opportunity. What a man learns of the native languages from his own servants is most often a spurious and useless lingo ; for these boys, accustomed as they are to being addressed in slovenly vernacular, soon grow very apt at grasping the sense of the most ungrammatical remark ; and thus the habit of using corrupt forms of speech is encouraged in their masters, who probably flatter themselves that they are making excellent progress until, chancing on some untutored denizen of the woods, they find themselves suddenly nonplussed.

As for the absence of legal training, I am inclined to think that this circumstance, so far from disqualifying Collectors for the performance of their judicial duties, is in itself to some extent an advantage, inasmuch as it enables them to bring to the study of native law and custom, minds free from the bias of European precedent. The broad principles of equity are the same all the world over. It needs no special education to distinguish *meum* from *tuum*, plain right from plain wrong ; and, in a country like Central Africa, almost everything beyond this is a matter of local peculiarity, and has to be learnt by experience, gradually and on the spot.

Generally speaking, the relation in which a European magistrate stands towards the people of Nyasaland is a very enviable one. If the Bantu negro could analyse his own social and political convictions, they would probably be found to centre about the patriarchal idea. By nature lazy, timid, and indifferent, he prefers to be

strongly, even autocratically, governed. He hates to take the initiative, he hates to make up his own mind; he throws all the responsibility he can on his rulers, and in consideration of this relief he is quite willing to concede to them absolute power. The orders of such a ruler are never disputed. His infallibility is never called into question. His will is law, and his *ipse dixit* an oracle. In fact he is at once the master and father of his people. Until recently, as we know, this power and responsibility were vested in the chief and in the headmen under the chief. But the tribal magnates of fifteen years ago are little more than puppets to-day. In their place stands the white man, a strange and dominant figure, and in his hands he holds the substance of their ancient authority. Assurance, with him, has, of a truth, been rendered doubly sure. The position, unconsciously created for him among the inhabitants of the country by the long-continued despotism of their native rulers, is in itself extraordinarily strong; and to the development of this position he has brought racial qualities of heart and brain, such as never were possessed by any native ruler in the continent—qualities which in the minds of the rude negroes place him upon an almost supernatural level. Yet, in matters of justice, the negro is certainly influenced far less by any particular belief in the wisdom of European magistrates than by his absolute confidence in their sincerity. A white man, no matter how great his acuteness and experience, is, clearly, much more liable to be misled as to the truth of

a complicated "mirandu" than a native chief would be; but then the white man is at least perfectly honest in his decisions, and the people recognise vaguely in him the hereditary instinct of fair play, although, I think, they attribute his impartiality, in the first place, to the obvious circumstance that he has no interest in being otherwise than impartial.

"A chief," one can fancy them saying, "has both friends and enemies amongst us. One village is dearer to him than another, and he has one law for slaves and aliens and another law for free men of his own blood. But in the eyes of the Mzungu (European) we are all black people and equal. The rich among us cannot bribe him to wrong the poor, for his riches are beyond measure, and our gifts are as nothing in his eyes; neither can any compel him, for he is more powerful than any. He came from a strange land far away, and knows not our feuds nor our friendships, but deals justly between us, because in his heart there is neither fear, nor love, nor hope, nor hate, nor anything that might lead him to favour or despite."

On account of this, and also because of an odd tendency shared by most primitive peoples to take pleasure in litigation for its own sake as a subtle form of excitement, Central Africans are very frequent and eager attendants at courts of justice. Indeed the number of suits which they may bring for settlement is limited by practically nothing except the patience of their judges. At times the task of sifting their curiously vague

evidence becomes a little wearisome, but it rarely happens that a "mirandu" is quite unrelieved by amusing or instructive points; and besides this, the attentive hearing of their grievances certainly teaches the people to look upon white men as their guides, philosophers, and friends, which of course is precisely the light in which it is most desirable that they should regard us.

As for native crimes, we shall find, as might be expected, that they are capable of a very brief and simple classification. It is a truism—but a truism which its exact applicability makes it worth while to repeat here—that from this point of view there is much in the condition of savage races that might be envied by more highly organised communities. I do not assert that the sum-total of crime is proportionately greater in Europe than in Central Africa. I dare say even that certain offences, such as violent attacks on life and liberty, commend themselves more readily to the Bantu negro than to the white man; but there is no disguising the fact that among European nations crime exhibits a variety and, in many instances, a signal degree of meanness and infamy, to which no parallel can be found in wild countries. Look through any handbook of criminal law, balance the offences which are more or less common to all humanity against those which are more or less peculiar to civilisation, and note the result. The disparity is striking enough. More than half our criminal legislation is directed against evils which, however familiar to us, have absolutely no place

in tribal bodies. The truth is that the broad effect of civilisation has always been to create and intensify divisions in the community. Its action is analogous to a chemical process. It causes a ferment among the constituents of society, some rising under its influence to the surface while others sink to the bottom; and in this way are developed the utmost extremes of probity and depravity of which our nature is capable.

Among savages, on the other hand, no such stirring forces are at work. While the difference between Europeans, morally or otherwise, may be as the difference between the poles, the difference between one Wa-Yao or one Anyanja and another is rarely worth considering. Nobody among them is much richer or much poorer, much wiser or much more foolish, much better or much worse than his neighbour. They have the same manners, customs, beliefs, instincts, occupations. Under any given circumstances they would act nearly in the same way. Their standard is low, but it is a natural standard; they are simply aboriginal natives, a few degrees removed from animals, and living together much as a herd of animals might live. Consequently, however rude and brutal they may be, they have among them *nothing in the nature of a criminal class* as we understand the term; no "submerged tenth," no body of habitual or professional evil-doers, such as prey upon the rich and polished societies of the Occident. Sheer ignorance, indifference, lack of imagination, lack of temptation, are the principal factors in the simplifying

of their criminal records. Inability to write eliminates at once all such ignoble swindles as are affected by an unscrupulous use of the pen. There are no accounts to be falsified, no wills to be tampered with, no cheques to be forged. Native innocence guards against unnatural crimes. Native apathy takes the sting from injuries such as slander, and causes them to be looked upon as too trivial for judicial punishment. It is worth nobody's while to be a common barrator where there are no lawyers' fees, or to utter spurious coins where the medium of exchange is live stock and produce. It is frankly impossible for anybody to trespass or poach where no exclusive territorial privileges are claimed and no game-laws exist.¹ Thus debarred from artificial sources of evil, the native confines himself to those fierce transgressions against life, liberty, and property which, originating in the primitive passions of man, have stained and chequered the history of all tribes and nations.

Murder, battery, abduction, robbery, theft: these are the principal crimes which he recognises, and all of them, like most other offences, he was wont to punish, according to his severe and simple code, by the supreme penalty of death.

Murder.—Wilful murders, of which the details have been considered and arranged beforehand, do not perhaps come more frequently under the notice of magistrates in Central Africa than else-

¹ The medium of exchange is now largely coin, and both territorial privileges and game-laws have been introduced, but all this has happened too recently to affect the general truth of my argument.

where, and are certainly far less common now than they used to be ; yet still, I fancy, not a few natives are done to death, without anything ever being heard of it, by secret methods more or less ingenious. Among the most atrocious of these methods is the one known as "*secatéra*," where the victim, having been bound and gagged, is killed by the gradual insertion into his body "*a tergo*" of a pointed reed or stick. If this cruel operation be performed with sufficient care, it is rarely or never detected ; for it leaves no visible external mark whatever, and the corpse, if found, is judged to be that of a person who has died from natural causes.

Suffocation again is sometimes resorted to. I once ordered the exhumation of a native who had died suddenly under suspicious circumstances, and found the whole face of the deceased plastered with "*ufa*" (meal), which had been forcibly stuffed and kneaded into his mouth and nostrils. Evidence was brought to show that he had been very drunk at the time of his death, and the state of the blood in the heart was such as to leave little doubt that he had been deliberately smothered while in this condition.

Poison is not infrequently used ; and, if what the natives say is true, some very singular and deadly drugs are known to them.

More common, however, than such premeditated crimes are homicides committed under a sudden impulse of passion, while acts amounting to manslaughter at English law constantly arise out of the old native system, which permitted an

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injured person to take redress into his own hands, and to retaliate, if he chose, upon the life of the thief who stole his goods, or the adulterer who tampered with his wife.

In this attitude there is at least some element of justice, and, grounded as it is in ancient usage, it may fairly be taken into account by European magistrates when punishing acts of private revenge. Even our law recognises serious provocation as an extenuating circumstance; native law regarded it as complete exculpation, so that the difference after all is only one of degree. Even under the old *régime*, however, an aggrieved man did not always avail himself of the right to exact the death penalty. All natives are disposed to look upon a wrong done to themselves rather in the light of a thing out of which profit can be made in the shape of material compensation, than as a moral offence to be visited as such on the offender. The latter, on falling into the hands of his enemy, was therefore, as a preliminary measure, held up to ransom; his escape in the meantime being rendered practically impossible by the use of the infamous "gorri-stick." This rude and terrible fetter, so well-known in connection with slavery all over the interior of Africa, consists simply of the trunk of a young tree having forked boughs, which latter are cut off within a few inches of their junction with the main stem, the whole thus forming an implement not unlike the handle of a gigantic catapult. The neck of the prisoner being placed in the angle of the fork, the branch stumps on

either side are firmly riveted with iron; and thus hampered he is coolly left to hoe the maize fields of his captor, with less chance of escape than any hobbled pony. Until a few years ago the gorri-stick was still to be seen occasionally in Central Africa, and I have myself released one or two men from its hard embrace, but it is now very uncommon. The thing of which it was the emblem, slavery—meaning that regular traffic in human flesh and blood which used to be conducted on so large a scale and in such barbarous fashion between Nyasaland and the East Coast—has, after a long struggle, been stamped out of existence; and with the ruin of the slave-trade, inter-tribal warfare has practically ceased. Not long since irregular raids were at once the business and the diversion of the people; and a raid in those days meant, in nine cases out of ten, an unprovoked attack, undertaken for the sake of plunder by a strong force against a weaker one, and carried out by surprise, with every circumstance of treachery and cruelty. The slaves taken in these excursions forfeited at once all the rights of freemen, and became the absolute property ("nyama" or "beasts") of their captors. If retained as domestic slaves, they were treated, as a rule, with some degree of consideration, it being naturally in the interests of the master to take care of his own goods; but nothing in native law or public opinion prevented him from selling, maltreating, or even killing them if he so pleased.

Assault.—Trivial cases of assault and battery

are common enough among the Central Africans themselves, although, on the other hand, one scarcely ever hears of their attacking or even threatening a white man.

Theft.—Of offences against property, petty thefts have probably increased in frequency of late years, owing to the comparative leniency with which such crimes are necessarily treated by European judges, and much the same may be said with regard to thefts of growing crops (prædial larceny).

I have already remarked on the generosity which natives exhibit towards each other in the matter of sharing and lending property. No doubt this arises in part from the natural amiability of the negro, but it has also the effect of depriving a thief of any excuse for stealing, and so justifies, in some measure, the tremendous severity with which all trespasses against the rights of property were punishable by native law. "A man who robs his neighbour," it is argued, "puts himself in the position of a wild beast, and deserves to be treated as such." Once a very unsophisticated Yao, living in a remote part of Zomba district, came to my office to report that he had found another Yao in the act of stealing his chickens, and had shot the man dead! It was evident that no doubt existed in his mind as to the propriety of his action. He told his story with the utmost simplicity, and seemed much surprised when I informed him that he had exceeded his rights in taking the life of the thief. Stealing from Europeans, however, who are

creatures apart from the native community, is regarded in a different light, and is practised, to some extent, almost universally, the offenders being usually the servants of the victim. They pilfer on a small scale, from what appears to them the superfluous abundance of their master's stores, but with such persistence that the ultimate gains must represent something considerable from a native point of view.

Burglary.—In contradistinction to petty theft, crimes like burglary and housebreaking are infinitely less frequent than might be supposed, considering that the houses of Europeans are never locked up, and that everything in them is practically at the mercy of the natives.

Robbery.—Robbery with violence also is not nearly so prevalent as it was in former times, although of late there has been some recrudescence of this offence, in the shape of highway robbery from the native porters (*tenga-tenga*), who are employed to carry European goods from one station to another, and who, sleeping unarmed at night upon the public roads, are peculiarly liable to be plundered in this manner.

Malicious Injuries to Property.—Malicious injuries to property are now so extremely rare that I cannot quote a single serious instance of the kind from my own experience, either at Zomba, Mlanje, or Nkata Bay; and, with the exception of two cases of arson, which occurred in 1902, I do not remember any having been reported from other districts within the last four years.

Cases relating to Women.—Much more numer-

ous than all other judicial cases put together are those which have to do with women, including both charges of rape and seduction, and suits for what we should call "restitution of conjugal rights." In the administrative year 1901-2 (the last for which statistics are available) the various cases, connected in one way or another with the "eternal feminine," which came before the native court at Zomba, amounted to no fewer than 417 out of a grand total of 669, or a proportion of more than three-fifths of the whole number of civil and criminal cases recorded. And, in truth, good reasons for this predominance are not far to seek. In Central Africa a wife, instead of being—dare I say it?—something in the nature of an incubus, is about the most valuable chattel that her husband can possess. Far from being called on to maintain her, it is by her that he is maintained, by her that all the rough and dirty work of his establishment is cheerfully undertaken and conscientiously performed. In fact, as Mr. Chamberlain puts it, "the husbandry on the land is carried out by means of the wives."¹ The lord and master of the household, in the meantime, can lie on his back and smoke, or gossip with his friends, or amuse himself in any way that he pleases. Moreover, his wives present him, as a rule, with many children, who, since they cost next to nothing and begin to work at a very tender age, are most desirable additions to his family, particularly if they happen to be daughters, in which case they command a market value, besides

¹ Speech in the House of Commons, March 19th, 1903.

attracting adherents to the paternal village in the shape of sons-in-law.

Under these circumstances it will be readily understood that wives are eagerly sought, and that the loss of one is a matter which her lord is never disposed to accept with the resignation sometimes displayed by injured husbands in more civilised parts of the world. Very rarely will a man seek divorce from his wife at the hands of a European magistrate, either on the ground of her infidelity or for any other cause, although he may chastise her privately.¹ A seducer, if detected, is invariably haled before the nearest "Boma" (Government station), and not infrequently the erring spouse is also brought there for admonition and by way of giving her a wholesome fright. But, in the end, she is always taken back, the truth being that, when a native really wishes to get rid of his wife, it is generally because she has grown old and feeble, or has become distasteful to him for some other reason which he knows would not be accepted by a white man. In such a case he adopts the simple alternative of abandoning her off-hand, without raising any question about it at all.

Women, on the contrary, often apply for separation from their husbands on the grounds of cruelty and adultery, but this always means that there is some other man to whom they have taken a fancy and who is willing to receive them.

¹ As English husbands were once empowered to do. "The husband also," says Blackstone, "by the old law, might give his wife moderate correction . . . in the same moderation that a man is allowed to correct his apprentices or children."

Charges of cruelty, so far as my experience goes, are rarely well founded, for Central African husbands are by no means in the habit of actively ill-treating their wives. Conjugal infidelity is, however, exceedingly common, and is not infrequently accompanied by some measure of neglect towards a wife who has fallen into disfavour. Elopements are not usually successful, since a deserted husband is apt to prove extraordinarily determined in pursuit, and thinks nothing of travelling long distances in order to recapture his mate. An unscrupulous father again will sometimes give his daughter to several men, one after the other, for the sake of the cattle or cloth which he receives as a present, on each separate occasion. When this trickery is exposed there is, of course, a great commotion; and eventually, if no private settlement is agreed upon, the whole party adjourn to the "Boma" in order to lay their dispute before the Collector. Cases of this kind, involving an astute sire, a meek daughter, and two or three indignant sons-in-law, often, as may be imagined, present points of a highly complex nature, and tend, at the same time, to develop an element of pure farce very unfavourable to the preservation of judicial gravity.

It must always be remembered that native law treated seduction and adultery as criminal offences in themselves, and that native opinion still regards them in the same light, a circumstance which we must attribute to the low state of moral feeling among the people and the markedly inferior position occupied by the women, who, through

the marriage contract, become the chattels of the husband as much as anything else that he has purchased. •

Exactly how far European magistrates ought to take cognisance of this attitude I do not presume to say, but it is, assuredly, both just and politic in all such matters to make some concession to local views. I am far from holding that the punishment of private immorality, as such, is a proper function of law ; but we must bear in mind that the average native can scarcely conceive of morality and immorality in the sense in which we have gradually learnt to understand those terms. No doubt he recognises seduction and adultery as grave offences ; but grave in what way ? As infractions of a moral law ? As transgressions against his own better nature ? Not at all. He regards them simply as injuries to property—to the property of the husband ; as crimes similar in their nature to the theft of a sheep, and more serious only in the precise degree in which a woman is more valuable than a sheep. An immoral deed, not involving obvious material harm to another, he would hardly consider as deserving any reproach whatever. An immoral deed, involving such harm, he knows to be reprehensible to that extent only. So far and no farther goes his imperfect sense of right and wrong ; far enough to bring his act within the jurisdiction of human courts ; not far enough to transform it into that for which man is accountable to his God and to himself alone.

For the same reason the more serious accusa-

tion of rape, although often brought against one another by natives, needs to be investigated with extreme caution. Native women will, in fact, rarely exhibit the degree of resistance necessary to establish such a charge, which frequently proves to be nothing else than an attempt to extort blackmail; and moreover we have to remember that the significance of acts which do technically amount to this crime is by no means the same among Central Africans as it is among ourselves, since the element which, in the latter case, invests rape with peculiar infamy, enters into the former case very slightly, or not at all.

According to the statements of earlier travellers in Nyasaland, adultery, as well as rape, was visited with great rigour by the native tribunals. Duff Macdonald, writing in 1882, says that, though adultery might be once condoned, a repetition of it "generally ensured dismissal (of the wife), if not death, while the seducer was also liable to be killed at sight." This was among the Wa-Yao, a relatively mild-mannered people. Other tribes were undoubtedly accustomed to punish such offences with revolting severity, notably the Makololo, whose treatment of adulterers was so barbarous that I cannot describe it here. Nor was the suspected wife of a Makololo much more leniently dealt with. She was forced to immerse her arms in boiling oil, or to submit to the embrace of the head-rack, a fiendish instrument of torture, in order to extort the name of her partner in guilt.

What a contrast to the procedure now adopted ! A short discussion at the magistrate's office, a note entered in the judicial minute-book, a little paternal admonition,—perhaps a small fine to be paid as compensation to the injured husband, and therewith "*Solvuntur risu tabulæ*," the incident is closed and the parties disperse, apparently quite satisfied.¹

Civil Cases.—Into the question of purely civil cases I shall not enter at any length ; for, though these are very numerous, the great majority are of a petty character and exhibit, in their general features, a monotonous similarity. I have already, in this chapter, attempted to explain how it is that the criminal records of Central African natives are so much simpler than our own, and it will be understood that reasons of much the same kind reduce their civil disputes to a still narrower field.

Generally speaking, such disputes are best decided by a reference, more or less strict, to what native law has prescribed, especially those which have to do with points of custom or etiquette. (See Chapter XVII.) Under this head may be classed all differences arising out of betrothal, marriage, divorce, title to land, inheritance of property, privileges of chiefs, and similar matters. If, for example, a man seeks to recover the purchase-money paid for a discarded wife, or to establish his right to sow crops

¹ This refers to cases of simple seduction only. Rape would, naturally, be punished with much greater severity.

on a particular plot of ground, or to restrain somebody else from appropriating the goods of a deceased person, we have merely to submit the facts of the case, when ascertained, to well-known principles of native law, and give judgment, as far as possible, in accordance with those principles, whether they happen to coincide exactly with our own ideas or not.

Trivial quarrels, originating in repudiated bargains and contracts and in claims for debt and so forth, constantly occur, but the amount at stake rarely exceeds a few shillings, and is often no more than a penny or two, the value of a string of dried fish or a bunch of maize-cobs. It is indeed a little surprising that natives, poor as they are, should think it worth while to take much trouble about matters of this description; yet they will readily perform a journey of forty miles or so to a court of justice and another forty miles back again, for the satisfaction of obtaining a white man's decision.

I have spoken of "contracts," but it is in fact extremely difficult and often quite impossible to arrive at the truth of questions which involve anything of the kind, because no natives (whether they be mere unsophisticated savages or men who have learnt to read and to use a pen) ever think of making a written agreement, or of getting anybody to witness a verbal one, or of offering or demanding any sort of acknowledgment or receipt whatever, although they have a perfect mania for lending, borrowing, and exchanging

among themselves all manner of property, from hard cash to clothes and implements.¹ It is in fact surprising, under the circumstances, that the confidence trick is not more often played.

¹ This craze is carried to such an extent that even names are sometimes temporarily exchanged as a mark of friendship !

CHAPTER XIX

THE PROTECTORATE GOVERNMENT

THERE can be little doubt that the mechanism of a Protectorate Administration, by reason of its remarkable simplicity and directness, is better suited to the present needs of British Central Africa and of other dependencies in a parallel stage of development than any more elaborate system would be. The aim of such an organisation is to act, as far as possible, *by* European officials *through* native chiefs. His Majesty's Commissioner stands for the supreme authority of the Imperial Government; but he is nevertheless easily accessible, if need be, to the humblest native, through the medium of the Collectors, who with their Assistant-Collectors represent the units of executive power and administer the several districts into which the Protectorate is divided.

The relation between these Collectors or district magistrates and the tribes under their charge exemplifies with peculiar clearness the true conception of a Protectorate policy. The Collector is or ought to be "*in loco parentis*" to his people. He must acquaint himself not only with their languages, but with their customs, prejudices and

beliefs. He must know personally all their chiefs and headmen. He must remember where their villages lie, must interest himself closely in their occupations and affairs, redress their grievances, punish their offences, and in short discharge towards them every function of paternal rule. Very truly has Sir Harry Johnston said of the Collector, that "if he has a great deal of power he is, at the same time, almost invariably an overworked individual, with many cares and responsibilities on his shoulders." I have already briefly discussed the administration of justice. The collection of revenue (chiefly from hut taxes) and the maintenance and disposal of the labour supply are other important duties which fall exclusively upon the district magistrates, who are further entrusted with a quantity of work not directly connected with native affairs, such as, for example, the repair of roads, bridges, and other public works, the supervision of station and township concerns, the management, in outlying districts, of the postal service, the enforcement of the game-laws, the issue of licences and permits, and a great variety of similar business.

The realisation of the hut tax is in itself a task of considerable difficulty ; for although a very large proportion of the total revenue derivable from this source is now paid, as a rule, with promptitude and regularity, there always remains a small exasperating fraction which must be literally hunted for towards the end of the financial year.

The introduction of the tax, which is still fixed

at its original amount, viz. three shillings per hut per annum,³ and which has been in force practically ever since the founding of the Protectorate, was facilitated by the circumstance that all Central Africans are perfectly familiar with the idea of taxation, having been accustomed, long before the advent of Europeans, to pay to their own chiefs, or to powerful blackmailing tribes like the Angoni, various irregular contributions, which must have amounted in the aggregate to a great deal more than the modest tribute exacted under the present *régime*.

I have spoken on this subject to natives from various parts of the Protectorate, and have always found them to entertain a very just conception of the theory of taxation, and a lively recognition of the advantages in return for which their money is paid.

At the same time the hut tax has been imposed in Nyasaland with great caution, in order to avoid any possible cause of discontent.

The whole of the West Nyasa district, for instance, was exempted during several years, in recognition of the valuable help accorded to us in the North End War and on other critical occasions by the Atonga who inhabit that neighbourhood; and there is still one considerable province—that of Northern Angoniland—where for various reasons the tax has never been enforced at all up to the present day.²

¹ Except in the special case of natives who refuse to work for a minimum period of one month in every twelve, as explained hereafter.

² See Chapter V. p. 88.

There has been a steady advance of late years in the amount of revenue obtained from this source, owing to the gradual settlement of the remoter districts and the increasing care devoted to their supervision. The actual collection of the tax is, however, a much simpler matter now than it was formerly. A few years since, Collectors were frequently obliged, by reason of the small circulation of coin amongst natives, to receive payment in kind; a system productive, as may be imagined, of infinite trouble and also of some loss, owing to the perishable nature of the goods thus tendered.

In those days a Government station must have presented very much the appearance of a farm-yard; for besides grain, fruit, eggs, and other produce, quantities of live stock were brought in by the taxpayers, including many thousands of fowls. These latter were turned wholesale into runs built for their reception, from which naturally many escaped or were stolen, while others died from overcrowding and similar causes. But with the gradual diffusion of coin this remarkable order of things has changed, and the tax is now paid almost exclusively in cash, to the great relief, no doubt, of those whose length of service enables them to recall the difficulties engendered by the earlier system.

Even yet it is hard to imagine how some of the natives in outlying parts of the Protectorate obtain their money. A certain sense of incongruity always attaches, in my mind, to the spectacle of an uncouth savage placidly unfolding from his

bark waist-cloth or goatskin purse the familiar coins with which a London clubman might have paid his cabdriver under the shadow of St. James' six months before. Still, the fact remains that shillings and florins have now penetrated to every corner of the land, and are well known to thousands of natives who have probably not seen half-a-dozen white men in their lives.

Talking of Hut Taxation brings me by a natural sequence of ideas to the subject of Labour, with which it is to some extent connected. I suppose that labour troubles are inseparable from the general progress of any community. Certainly British Central Africa has had its full share of those troubles ; and, though the condition of affairs in this respect has recently much improved, a brief review of the position may not be wholly out of place.

During the few years which immediately followed the founding of the Protectorate, the local labour supply seems to have been more or less adequate to the needs of the small European colony ; but with the introduction of the coffee industry and the consequent increase in the white population, there came, naturally enough, a sudden demand for carriers to transport stores of all kinds, and for labourers to hoe and weed the newly-opened plantations, and to carry out and keep in repair the various public works which it had become necessary for the Administration of the country to undertake.

Considering the question first of all from the point of view of transport, I must remind my

readers that the great, continuous waterway of the Zambesi-Shiré is interrupted for all practical purposes at Katunga's on the Lower Shiré. Immediately above this point the fairway of the river is barred by the Murchison Falls at Kalambizi, and by the Pampina and Pampindu Rapids, navigation being resumed at Matope and carried thence by the Upper river to Fort Johnston. Katunga's is separated by 28 very steep miles from Blantyre, the head-quarters of the trading and planting interests, and by a further 40 miles of level road from Zomba, the head-quarters of the Government. A branch road 33 miles long runs from Blantyre to Matope. Katunga is thus divided by 28 and 68 miles respectively from the two most important centres of the Shiré Highlands, and by 61 miles from the station for Fort Johnston and Lake Nyasa. There are practically no draught animals in Central Africa, nor is there any mechanical means of transport. All goods, therefore, which enter the country at Katunga's, whether consigned to the Shiré Highlands or to the Lake districts, must perforce be carried for many miles on the backs of native porters, or, as they are called in Nyasaland, "tenga-tenga." The coffee-planters and the various Government departments depend, as entirely as do the transport companies, on local labour, which is thus subjected to at least three constant and imperative calls, without taking into account the requirements of private travellers, sportsmen and others, who employ, in the aggregate, a considerable number of men.

Until recently the position of the native towards the labour question was as follows—

If he had not, by a certain date, paid his hut tax for the current financial year, he might be called upon to work for one month, and no more, at the customary rate (for unskilled labour) of 3s. per month, at the expiration of which time his pay was made over to the Administration in the discharge of his tax, which it exactly covered.

If, on the other hand, he chose to pay his tax on or before that date, he became free of all further liability in this direction, and might work or not just as he pleased.

Now, in proportion as the demand for labour increased, the natives, well aware that the possession of a hut tax receipt exempted them from requisition as defaulters, began to pay their tribute with increasing regularity; and, in consequence, the number of those who could be legitimately compelled to work, even for the space of a single month in the year, grew smaller and smaller, until at last Collectors of districts found themselves placed between Scylla and Charybdis—between a European community clamouring for labour, and a native population who did not wish to work, and who knew themselves to be under no obligation to do so.

At this critical point, then, the labour supply of the whole Protectorate became dependent on the moral influence exercised by Collectors over the inhabitants of their districts. I am far from wishing to underrate the force of such influence,

especially among a simple and amiable people like the Bantu negroes of Nyasaland; but a certain inequality in the distribution of that noble faculty, which draws the good-will and commands the obedience of subjects, warns us not to rely upon it as a perfectly stable quantity in practical politics. When present in its fullest perfection, it can achieve wonders, no doubt; but hardly any two men seem to possess it in quite the same degree; and, at the worst, mischance may conceivably ordain that an Administration shall be largely composed of able and conscientious members in whom it is deficient. I do not mean to imply that this was at all the case in Nyasaland. On the contrary, many thousands of natives, by a judicious admixture of authority and persuasion, were induced to bestir themselves, against their immediate inclinations perhaps, yet without any infraction of the principles of justice and humanity.

Nevertheless it soon became apparent that the case was one which called for some special act of legislation; and accordingly, in 1902, there appeared the New Hut Tax Regulations, which provide that all natives, who refuse to work for a minimum period of one month in any particular year, shall pay, in respect of that year, a tax of six shillings, instead of the ordinary tax of three shillings.

Perhaps no wiser or more important measure than this has ever been passed in Nyasaland, where it was received with strong approval by all classes of Europeans, and, moreover, with ab-

solute equanimity by the natives themselves. This latter circumstance is particularly satisfactory, because some persons, while supporting the amended regulations, had, prior to their coming into force, expressed doubts as to whether the new order of things would be quietly accepted by the people. Possibly the fact that no actual friction ensued in any part of the Protectorate might not, of itself, be incompatible with the existence of some passive ill-feeling; but had such ill-feeling been present, it would assuredly have come to our knowledge in other ways. This has not been so, and the marked absence of discontent goes to prove what I have always held, that the natives, however lazy and ignorant they may be, have a very keen sense of justice, and are by no means so stupid that they cannot recognise the propriety of a measure which happens to be in opposition to their private desires.

The new regulations mentioned above, together with the establishment of a Labour Bureau and the exercise of elaborate precautions for ensuring the humane treatment of native workmen, have gone far to tide over present difficulties; but we may reasonably assume that, as the country becomes developed, the labour problem will recur in some form or other, and in the meantime too much attention can hardly be devoted to the subject.

Of one thing I feel sure, and that is, that a good deal of harm is done (with excellent motives very likely) by critics who, having little or no practical knowledge of this most difficult question, intro-

duce recklessly into their arguments such terms as "forced labour," "slavery," and so forth. Undoubtedly anything in the nature of tyrannous interference with the rights of the subject is at once a great iniquity and a great blunder, and deserves, as such, the severest condemnation on moral and political grounds alike. But we have to remember that the situation of the African native towards the question under discussion is peculiar in this, that he is beyond the reach of nearly all the influences which compel white men to exert themselves. In Europe the simple principle of competition settles such matters without the intervention of governments; and the problem is, not how to induce men to work, but how to find enough work for them to do. In Africa the reverse condition obtains; and if the natives are to shake off their lethargic habits and take a fair share in the development of their country, it rests with us to devise something which, as far as possible, shall take the place of absent natural incentives.

For the sake of clearness let us take it that labour may be classed, for the present purpose, under three heads, viz.—

(1) Free labour in the strictest sense of the term; that is, work done for its own sake and for nothing else, as when we say "a labour of love."

(2) Labour performed for the sake of gain or glory.

(3) Labour performed for the satisfaction of physical needs.

Now, among civilised nations labour of the first

kind is not uncommon, while labour of the second and third kinds is practically universal.

Among African negroes, on the other hand, labour of the first kind is absolutely unknown, and indeed inconceivable. Labour of the second kind, though not perhaps so wholly unintelligible, is never practised, and labour of the third kind is reduced to the smallest amount which the bare needs of human existence demand. The fine ardour of the craftsman, the desire for personal fame, the pride of race, the ambition to amass wealth and to transmit it; all those mighty levers, by which the white peoples of the earth are moved to unceasing endeavour, affect the native not in the smallest degree. Even the overpowering instinct of self-preservation moves him but slightly. Only to satisfy the most urgent material needs will he stir at all, and then in the most perfunctory fashion. Food he must have, and so he tills the soil, not with the almost loving care and forethought of civilised man, but rudely and hastily, heedless how much harm he inflicts on the fertile earth, if only his belly is replenished. A shelter he must have, and so he builds him one; not a thing of beauty or even of permanence, whereby future generations might trace him and say "here dwelt a man"; but a mere bundle of canes, tied with bark and plastered with mud, more like the sty of a hog or the lair of a jackal than a human dwelling-place.

The late Professor Henry Drummond in his book on *Tropical Africa* (a work inaccurate in some of its details, yet sound enough in the

general idea which it conveys of its subject), after remarking that the male natives of Nyasaland sow crops, eat, drink, and sleep, goes on to say :¹ "I have tried to think of something else that these people habitually do, but their vacuous life leaves nothing more to tell."

No doubt the easy, animal existence led by primitive men has in it a certain element of picturesqueness and simplicity which is very attractive. We all feel this when we mix with savages in their own homes; nobody, I venture to think, feels it more strongly than I do; but whether such an existence is in itself admirable or not, whether the net result of civilisation tends to increase or circumscribe the measure of human happiness, is after all a question of philosophy, and as such is foreign to the issue before us. We are now concerned with an intensely practical point; namely, how far is this attitude of primitive indolence and aloofness compatible with the needs of a young Protectorate? However earnestly we may insist on the importance of tact and caution in introducing reforms among a native populace, however anxious we may be to guard against the risks of too hastily grafting artificial ideas and standards upon a savage stock, it is yet sufficiently clear that a European Government, by virtue of the new and imperative claims which it creates, must necessarily modify to some extent the irresponsibility of the tribes among whom it is established. The same debt is due by the

¹ Footnote on p. 59 of *Tropical Africa*.

inhabitants of the African Protectorate to their Administrations, as is due to every Government by those for whose safety and welfare it provides. The evils from which our advent rescued the people of Nyasaland in particular are such as can scarcely be realised by persons accustomed to live in civilised environments. To be always at the mercy of the strongest, where the strongest was also the most rapacious and the most pitiless, to be plundered, to be sold into slavery, without hope of mercy or the possibility of redress—such for unnumbered centuries was the lot of a great majority of the inhabitants of Central Africa. But with the introduction of British rule there sprang into being, for the first time in the known history of the country, a power strong enough to prevent others from oppressing, while not disposed to practise oppression on its own account. Within the space of a few years this new organisation annihilated the local slave-trade, reduced to order the turbulent clans whose habit it had been to rob and murder their weaker neighbours, established judicial courts accessible to the humblest, erected free hospitals for the treatment of the sick, constructed hundreds of miles of roads, and in many other ways effected a great and lasting improvement in the lot of its native subjects. It is only reasonable then that the people, on whom such benefits have been conferred, shall make such return as they can by placing at the disposal of their Government the moderate amount of labour necessary for the maintenance of its undertakings. Among ourselves—that is,

among Western nations—we see not only that taxation is universal and sometimes heavy, but that the State does not scruple, where necessary, to demand labour in its own interests, quite apart from what natural pressure and the wants of the individual prescribe. We know, for example, that a period of compulsory military service is exacted from its subjects as a right by almost every Government in Europe. The system of conscription may not appeal to us as Englishmen. We may justly rejoice that our geographical situation has hitherto enabled us to dispense with anything of the kind; but we do not on that account refuse to recognise the necessity for such measures in countries less fortunately placed than our own, or blame continental administrations because the interests of national defence oblige them to raise and maintain great standing armies. Yet the hardship entailed upon the individual by military conscription is many times greater than that which would be entailed upon the African native by what we require of him. The young Frenchman or German must devote himself to his duties as a soldier at the very time when he would otherwise be embarking on a civil career; but the negro's days are his own; the little that there is to do in his household is done by his women, and he himself has absolutely no interests which could be prejudiced in any way by his absence for a short spell of work in the plantation or on the roads.

I speak in this matter as one who knows the Central Africans well, as one who likes them

sincerely, and who holds it to be the bounden duty of a Protectorate Government to respect and uphold their interests. But we must look fairly at both sides of the question. If we owe a duty to the natives, they also owe a duty to us. We are performing our part of the contract loyally, and we have a right to expect that they shall assist us with their labour in the performance of designs which tend to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

In connection with the labour problem generally, it is interesting to note a recent proposal which excited much attention at the time when it was first mooted. I refer to the suggestion that the labour supply of East and Central Africa should be tapped for the benefit of the southern miner. One of the most prominent advocates of this plan is Sir Harry Johnston, and it has received to a certain extent the support of Mr. Chamberlain, who used his influence to obtain the Marquis of Lansdowne's authority for the recruiting of a thousand Central Africans, to be employed as an experimental measure in the goldfields of the Transvaal.

Having little or no practical knowledge of South African affairs, I am unable to enter into this important question as fully or as confidently as I could wish from the South African point of view ; but I would recommend those of my readers who desire to obtain a general idea of the position and claims of the gold-mining industry to refer to the debates which took place in the House of Commons on March 19 and 24, 1903, and par-

ticularly to the admirably lucid statements of the Colonial Secretary on the subjects of taxation and labour.

Under the whole circumstances there can be no doubt as to the wisdom of a tentative attitude on the part of the Imperial Government towards the proposed scheme for opening communication between the capital of South Africa and the labour supply of the Protectorates. The enlistment of 1000 men cannot seriously affect Nyasaland, and the result of the experiment will go far to determine whether a more extended intercourse between South and Central Africa is desirable or not. Pending this result it is certain that nothing—not even the pressing needs of the gold-mining industry—could justify an unrestricted diversion of labour. I do not say that a proportion, at least, of the men required could not be obtained from the Protectorates. So far as Nyasaland is concerned, the number of adult male natives is perhaps large enough to supply present local demands with something to spare, if every man could be induced to devote a fair amount of time to the sort of work that European employers require. We know, however, that this has not hitherto proved to be the case; we know that of all the problems which have beset the Protectorate Administration, the problem of labour has for years been the most urgent and the most difficult; and though it is possible that curiosity or the spirit of adventure might lead a certain number of Central Africans to renounce their indolent habits, and to go so far afield as to Southern

Rhodesia or the Transvaal, we have to consider what effect this would have upon the emigrants themselves, and upon their country.

I do not propose to enter here into the question of how far the local price of labour would be forced up by intercourse with the South, or into similar arguments affecting exclusively the commercial interests of Europeans. It has been remarked that we cannot with justice prevent natives from going where their work will command the highest remuneration ; and, while it is impossible not to feel some sympathy in this matter with the planters and traders who have cast in their lot with Nyasaland, and have devoted time and money to its development, I quite admit that we are in no way entitled to interfere with the inhabitants of the country from motives of pure self-interest, or to restrict their freedom of action for the financial advantage of any community. On the other hand, it is, I take it, not only our right, but a duty incumbent upon us, to weigh carefully, on their behalf, the probable issue of any policy which exposes them to new influences, and tends to introduce important changes into the general tenor of their lives. It behoves us to look farther into the future with regard to such a policy than they themselves can do, and to determine, as nearly as we are able, not merely the immediate but the ultimate results of a departure from the order of things to which they have been accustomed. The immediate results of sending Central Africans to the mines would obviously include a great material gain to

them, since their labour would be paid for at rates enormously in excess of those current in their own country. But what of the risks to be set off against this pecuniary benefit?

I trust that, while thus directing attention to remoter consequences, I shall be acquitted of any desire to treat a practical question from any other than a practical point of view. There is, in truth, little danger that a man whose life has been spent, as a great part of my own has been, in wild countries and among the stress of active duties, will be too much inclined to the habit of general speculation. The possibilities to which I allude, albeit they lie in the future, do not the less on that account deserve our attention. What we have to consider is the whole effect likely to be produced on a simple aboriginal people by sudden contact with civilisation of that abnormal kind which characterises the neighbourhood of goldfields. Would men, constituted as the Central Africans are, be improved by a temporary sojourn in such an environment as that of the Rand? Or let us put it this way: would they escape actual deterioration? Would they return to their homes better or happier men? Would they return as docile, as trustful, as satisfied as when they left? If not, apart altogether from their individual features, how would their repatriation affect the stability of the Protectorate? This is an aspect of affairs which cannot be overlooked. The native population, of Nyasaland outnumbers the actual European population by some *two thousand to one*; and it

is only because this immense majority is unsophisticated, contented, and unspotted from the morbid unrest of more highly-organised communities, that we have hitherto been able to govern it at a comparatively moderate cost, and to maintain, almost without effort, relations of peace and goodwill between "the subject many and the dominant few."

To my mind the division between South and East-Central Africa is much more than a geographical expression. It represents a radical and lasting difference of conditions.

On the temperate side of the Zambesi lies a country which in all essentials is a white man's land. But, stretching northward from that great river into the feverish belt of the tropics, there are thousands upon thousands of miles which can never be permanently settled by Europeans. Providence has set aside, as it were, this vast malarial tract to be a perpetual sanctuary for the aboriginal races of the African continent. We may do great things in tropical Africa, but it is through the natives that we must work there. I see no future for the country apart from them. I can conceive of no real progress which does not take them into account.

We have in these tribes a great subject population, entirely confident in the power and wisdom of their rulers, healthy-minded, simple and friendly to a degree not surpassed by any people owing allegiance to His Majesty. But they are emphatically not, as yet, capable of taking care of themselves, of resisting evil influences, or of

investing the proceeds of their labour to permanent advantage. A writer in the *Saturday Review*¹ has, in fact, summed up their character with perfect justice and aptitude by describing them as creatures "with the passions of men and the brains of children."

It will be easily understood, therefore, that the responsibilities of Government with reference to them are of a very delicate nature.

I am entirely free, in this matter, from any prejudice against the gold-mining industry of South Africa. While my practical acquaintance with the labour problem is limited, more or less, to the standpoint of Protectorate interests, I do not, I hope, under-estimate the vital importance of that industry, not only to the large number of persons directly engaged in it, but to the agricultural and other classes who look to prosperous towns for a market; nor do I affirm that it is necessarily impossible to devise and safeguard a scheme whereby East-Central Africa should contribute its quota towards the needs of the mines. Only, under the circumstances, I think nobody who has the welfare of Nyasaland and its people at heart can read without satisfaction the assurance given by the Marquis of Lansdowne to the deputation which waited on him on March 23, 1903, to protest against a diversion of labour from Central Africa to the Rand mines. In reply to that deputation Lord Lansdowne said, in effect, that the Foreign Office had never contemplated anything like an indiscriminate or

¹ January 24, 1903.

unrestricted movement of labour; that the experimental operation (of importing Central Africans into the South) would take place on a modest scale and would be carefully watched; and that, if there appeared any signs of the disastrous effects which the deputation anticipated, steps would be taken to prevent the experiment from being carried any further. Doubtless the results of this measure will be observed with interest both by those who hold pronounced opinions on the policy which it is designed to test, and by many whose views are as yet undecided. With the explanation quoted above, nobody, in the meantime, has any reason to be dissatisfied.

Before leaving the question of labour altogether, it is fitting that some reference should be made to the projected railway which is to connect Chiromo on the Lower Shiré River with Blantyre, the commercial capital of the Shiré Highlands.

Although, during the period of its construction, this railway will necessarily absorb some thousands of men in addition to those engaged in ordinary avocations; and though, when it is finished and brings with it, as we hope it may do, fresh capital and enterprise, the demand for workers will probably again increase, yet it cannot fail to affect very beneficially the general position of the natives towards labour, if only by freeing us from the necessity of employing them in transport.

Less obvious perhaps than other advantages, this one is among the most far-reaching that a railway can confer. My readers will have

gathered, long ago, that I am no advocate of a life of idleness for our native subjects. But when we say that they ought to work, we recognise, I take it, a general principle only; and while we allow certain forms of labour to be proper for mankind, we must pronounce certain other forms to be the reverse. That men should hoe, dig, plant, and build is right and natural; but that men, black or white, should expend their energies in the purely mechanical business of fetching and carrying (although in a new country circumstances may, and indeed must, make it temporarily unavoidable) is not a state of things which can be contemplated as a permanency. Give a native a load to be delivered thirty or forty miles away, and you give him a task that a mule or a bullock could perform better than he; but set him to build a bridge, to make a road, to prune a garden, and you entrust him with a man's work—with something that calls, in however slight a degree, for the exercise of human intelligence.

I have no quarrel with the general manner in which transport has been conducted hitherto. Leaving out of account, for the moment, both natural feelings of humanity and legislative checks upon injustice, employers are perfectly aware that, in a country like Central Africa, their chance of getting labour depends primarily on the reputation which they enjoy among the natives themselves, and that acts of oppression or breaches of good faith will infallibly have the effect of diverting their own much-needed share of the labour supply to other and possibly rival quarters.

It is true also that many natives have a certain liking for transport work, or at any rate prefer it to other kinds of employment; yet I think it will be found that most of those who entertain this preference belong to inferior tribes. The professional "tenga-tenga" (porters), if they can be so called—the men, I mean, on whom we have chiefly relied for regular transport—certainly represent some of the lowest native types inhabiting the Protectorate, and come, almost exclusively, of bastard stocks like the Ajawa, Achéwa, Achipéta, etc. Multitudes of these people have been in the habit of leaving their homes every year to take service as carriers in the Shiré Highlands. On the other hand, the best of our native races have never contributed much towards the needs of transport. The comparatively intelligent Wa-Yao, for instance, from whom we recruit our clerks, interpreters, soldiers, masons, carpenters, and so forth (although excellent carriers on occasion, and willing enough to serve in this capacity an employer whom they know personally), do not, in any sense, make a regular business of portage, and would never think of setting out periodically to seek such occupation.

The railway, as a labour-saving device, will put a different complexion on the whole problem of which I am speaking, and, it is to be hoped, will enable us to embark more seriously on the industrial education of natives than has ever yet been possible. Industrial schools, such as are attached to many missionary establishments, are of great value as far as they go; but the range of

such institutions is necessarily limited, and the number of pupils who receive instruction there is not sufficient to leaven the mass of the population. It is out of the question, of course, that we should attempt to give to the natives generally, or on any large scale, at present, the careful and even elaborate training bestowed on a small fraction by missionary teachers. The position merely amounts to this, that, on completion of the railway, thousands, whose active occupation hitherto has consisted in transporting loads from one station to another, will be available, under qualified supervision, for employment of a different kind; employment which, while calling for no particular technical knowledge, will demand some exercise of reason, and afford some scope for intelligent interest.

CHAPTER XX

RELIGIOUS MISSIONS

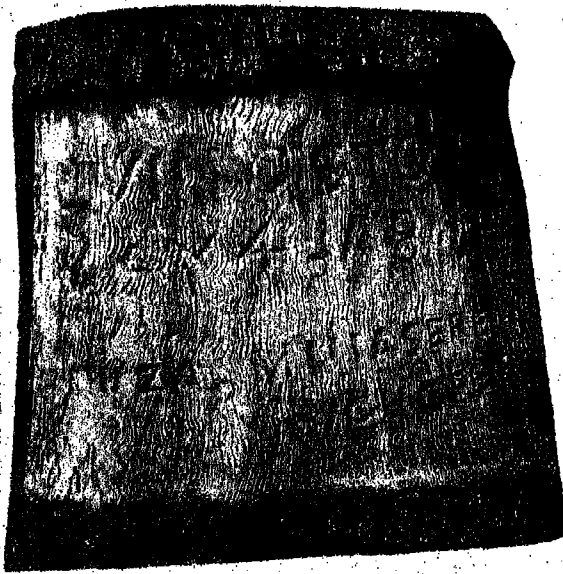
It has always appeared to me a great pity that a subject of such interest and importance as that of missionary enterprise should, of all others, have been involved in acrimonious discussion, and, by a long series of mistakes and prejudices on both sides, rendered peculiarly difficult of approach. Conscious of this, I had even intended, although my views are in no sense extreme, to avoid altogether a topic so fruitful of controversy; but, on reflection, it seems clear that no work professing to deal with Central African affairs can afford to pass over, in absolute silence, an aspect of things so intimately associated with the history of the country.

Of all parts of the world, Central Africa may claim, in truth, to be the one most nearly identified with missionary work. The first European to enter its solitudes was the greatest of missionaries, and one of the greatest of men. More than thirty years ago the voice of Livingstone, the Forerunner, cried in that wilderness. Many who know nothing of geographical or political divisions still vaguely associate with his name the area

lying between the Zambesi, Lake Nyasa and the Congo sources ; and even his tomb in Westminster Abbey serves but to remind us how entirely he lived for that Africa, whose jealous dust holds, to this day, all that was mortal of his kind and fearless heart.¹

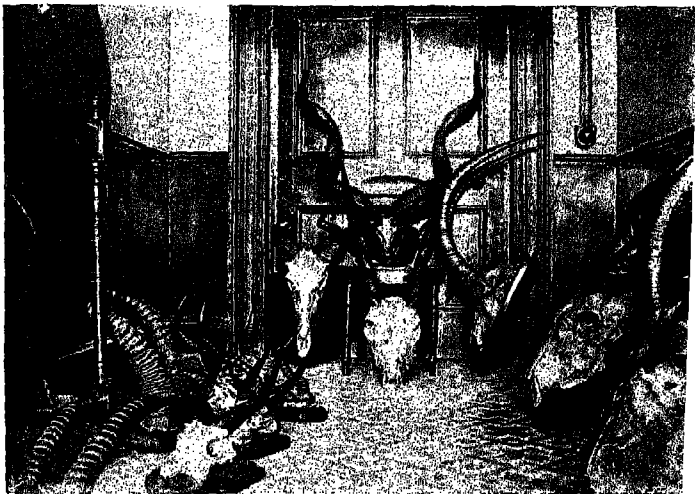
Nor must we forget that what Livingstone himself accomplished, although a great and memorable achievement, is but a part of that for which we owe recognition to his memory. The enthusiasm roused by his example was indescribable. There is scarcely anything in modern religious history to be compared to it, and for its political parallel we must go back a hundred years and recall the extraordinary outburst of patriotic sentiment evoked by the ardour of William Pitt. Public interest, strongly excited by the romantic nature of Livingstone's enterprise, by the dangers to which he was known to be exposed, and by his long disappearance from the ken of the civilised world, culminated, on his death, in profound and universal sympathy. The feeling that his work must be carried on grew apace, and, among a certain section of his countrymen, assumed the force of passionate conviction. Money flowed

¹ It is nevertheless astonishing how few natives have any recollection of Livingstone. I have travelled in many neighbourhoods through which he must have passed within the memory of all men over fifty years of age, and have never been able to discover one who knew anything about him. The natives of Zomba and the surrounding parts, when asked for the name of the first white man who visited their country, nearly always answer "Makanani" (John Buchanan). Now Buchanan came to Nyasaland in the service of the Church of Scotland Mission, some time after Livingstone's death.



INSCRIPTION ON THE TREE AT OLD CHITAMBO'S, UNDER WHICH
THE HEART OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE WAS BURIED BY HIS
NATIVE SERVANTS, WHOSE NAMES ARE CARVED BENEATH
HIS OWN.

*From a photograph by His Honour the Administrator of North-Eastern
Rhodesia (R. E. Codrington, Esq.).*



SOME CENTRAL AFRICAN TROPHIES.

From a photograph by Miss Winifred Russell.

into the coffers of the missionary societies ; volunteers flocked to offer their services in the cause ; and, within a short time, the Established and Free Churches of Scotland had led the way by founding each its own settlement in Nyasaland—the former at Blantyre in the Shiré Highlands, the latter on the western shore of Lake Nyasa ; while, nearly at the same time, the African Lakes Company was formed, with the double object of promoting trade and co-operating, as far as possible, with the missions, in their endeavours to ameliorate the condition of the natives. Besides these, the Universities' Mission of the Anglican Church has been at work for many years past on both sides of Lake Nyasa ; while other missions, now regularly settled in various parts of British Central Africa, include the Baptist Industrial Mission, the Zambesi Industrial Mission, and the Dutch Reformed Mission (Calvinist)—not to mention the London Missionary Society (Wesleyan), and the White Fathers of Algiers (Roman Catholic), whose principal sphere of activity lies in the Tanganyika region, immediately north of the Protectorate.¹

I desire, in the first place, to record my warm appreciation (and I think I may say that it is shared by all laymen in Central Africa) of the great benefits conferred upon both the European and native communities by mission work in its industrial form. It is by industrial

¹ My own experience of missionaries has been confined principally to those of the Established Church of Scotland (Blantyre Mission). With the Universities' Mission I have never been brought into contact at all.

teaching only that we can hope to prepare the natives for lessons of a higher order, and there is no gainsaying the fact that, for what has been done in this direction hitherto, the credit is due mainly or entirely to missionaries. Natives with a knowledge of skilled labour and crafts can even now be obtained hardly anywhere else than from the mission schools, which have furnished us, for several years past, with clerks, interpreters, masons, bricklayers, carpenters, gardeners, and many others, trained to, at least, a comparative degree of proficiency in their respective callings, and capable, under European supervision, of turning out very sound and excellent work.

About the purely religious curriculum of the missions I shall say nothing, because I know next to nothing about it, and because, in any case, it is hardly a subject upon which it would be profitable or becoming for a layman to enlarge. Personally I am bound to confess that I have no liking for the type of native who actually spends his life under missionary tutelage. He always strikes me as being an awkward, self-assertive, and somewhat sanctimonious person, lacking in proper respect for his superiors, and in that pleasant simplicity and gaiety so characteristic of the aboriginal Bantu. Some of these mission boys have turned out thorough rascals too ; but on the other hand I dare say that many of them are sincere Christians according to their lights, and that their defects, however offensive, are no more than skin-deep. Certainly it is impossible not to feel a good deal of sympathy with the missionaries

themselves, whose task must be a most difficult and trying^o one. Against their occasional failures and against the harm which some of them have unconsciously done, we must set off many important successes ; and indeed, on a general review of their work in Central Africa, I think most of us will admit that its net effect has been beneficial to the country.

How comes it then that a class of men who do much good, whose lives are free from the grosser forms of reproach, and whose sincerity, as a rule, is beyond question—how comes it, I say, that missionaries as a body have been the centre of friction and controversy all over the world, and that relations of perfect cordiality hardly anywhere obtain between them and the mass of the lay community? So far as Central Africa is concerned, the state of affairs in this direction has infinitely improved of late ; but it would be idle to pretend that strong, mutual prejudices have not existed there, and that a few of them do not still survive. I am inclined to think, or rather I am confident, that the true reason of this lies, not so much at the door of the present generation of missionaries as at that of their predecessors. During the years that elapsed between the founding of the first mission stations and the introduction of British rule, Nyasaland owned no central political authority whatever, and the missionaries themselves accordingly assumed and exercised a certain temporal jurisdiction in and around their several headquarters. No sort of blame under the circumstances attaches to them for this ; in fact their

hands were probably forced by the natives, who, as I have explained, turn instinctively to Europeans for guidance. Nevertheless we know how quickly the love of temporal power in any shape grows upon men who have once tasted the sweets of it. Neither religion nor philosophy can wholly quell, when once it has been awakened, this passionate jealousy, so strangely blended of our weakness and our strength. Minds of the highest order have been unable to resist its influence, and the men of whom I am speaking were, with a few notable exceptions, ill qualified to do so by all the circumstances of their character and training. Unaccustomed to initiate or to command, they suddenly found themselves separated by thousands of miles from all authority superior to their own—from the authority of their churches and from the authority of their Government—and placed among rude and simple tribes, over whom it was easy and natural for them to acquire a large authority.

I am far from saying that they abused their power; on the contrary, they employed it, generally, with prudence and good effect; but where they did wrong was in clinging to it obstinately long after the time when it would have been wise and loyal and dignified to let it go. Excuses, or at least explanations, are not altogether wanting for their action in this respect. They had long been accustomed to play a certain part in the management of native affairs without any particular let or hindrance. They had grown to value the influence thus acquired, both for its own

sake and as a powerful support to their religious teaching. They felt that their considerable local experience invested them with qualifications not possessed by the new magistrates, to whom the administration of temporal justice had been assigned ; and they resented a state of things which withdrew the natives, to some extent, from their control and divided sharply an allegiance once given to themselves alone. While thus critically disposed towards the Government, they looked with equal disfavour upon the pioneers of commerce, upon the people who had come to exploit the resources of the land and to make money there. It is true that no inrush of adventurers had taken place, such as sensational discoveries have attracted at different times to South Africa and elsewhere ; but still prospectors and traders had begun to arrive in certain numbers, seeking for traces of gold or bartering their beads and calico for native products. Among other types these naturally included, at that time, not a few who had wandered and lived from hand to mouth in a variety of situations, and whose errant and adventurous careers had developed in them a certain habitual licence and a jovial coarseness of speech and bearing highly antipathetic to more conventional natures. The missionaries were men of good intentions, but, for the most part, of woefully narrow views. They beheld with alarm and displeasure what seemed to them an irruption of the ungodly into their quiet province. Wanting that fine spirit of charity that can perceive and touch the good

underlying many a rough and lawless nature, they fixed at once upon the too obvious faults of the new-comers, and assumed towards them, without discrimination, that attitude of arrogant, spiritual superiority so intolerable to average men. As might have been expected, this conduct provoked retaliation from every quarter. The magistrates complained bitterly, and not without reason, that they were continually hampered in the execution of their duties by the jealousy of missionaries, whose interference in the affairs of temporal government made the natives uncertain as to where real authority in such matters lay. At the same time the general public denounced "mission cant" in unmeasured terms and brought various other accusations, some misconceived or exaggerated, and others, it is to be feared, only too well founded.

The spirit in which missionary enterprise was conducted at that time was in truth such as laid it open to many reproaches, which have since, in a great measure, ceased to attach to it. To begin with, the pioneers of religion were far too anxious to convert the heathen and too ready to accept hasty declarations on the part of their pupils. They came among the tribes holding in one hand the Bible, and in the other, not the sword of the Covenant, but the corn and calico for which a native will do almost anything that is required of him. What the missionaries required in this instance was, to his untutored mind, too often a mere formula, which he repeated readily enough, with no deeper feeling, probably, than some

degree of astonishment that so simple a performance should procure for him food, clothing, shelter, and protection. These off-hand conversions, recorded and paraded, in excellent faith very likely, but with singular lack of judgment, did infinite harm to the missionary cause. They gave excuse for the sneers of all who bore that cause a grudge, they provoked the smiles of the indifferent, and they alienated many who, while not unfavourably disposed towards missionary enterprise in general, regarded it as both ill-advised and unseemly thus prematurely to accept, from irresponsible savages, that solemn profession of faith before which so many earnest and cultured minds have recoiled in perplexity and dismay. Again, the doctrine of social equality between the white and black races (a doctrine which, if not expressly taught by the early missionaries, was at any rate implied most unmistakably in their attitude towards natives) occasioned widespread offence, and was condemned, with perfect justice, as incompatible with the maintenance of our prestige in a country where prestige is no pleasant conceit, but the very foundation of our supremacy and the safeguard of our lives ; where we are cut off from our fellows by singular difficulties of access, and outnumbered as hardly anywhere else in the world—to such an extent, indeed, that fifty or sixty civil and military officers have to govern and hold in check a subject population at least nine hundred thousand strong.

It may be asked, how, in such a case, did these

same missionaries acquire and retain their considerable local authority during the years when they were unsupported by the presence of a European Administration? I answer that the control exercised by the missions, although real enough of its kind, differed fundamentally from that which a regularly-constituted government must possess. The missionaries themselves would probably say that they ruled through love; and this is quite true, in so far that they were in the country on sufferance, and very wisely made no attempt to disguise the fact. Their influence was far from being universal or complete. On the contrary, it was restricted to the neighbourhood of their several stations, and made itself felt principally in judicial matters. It depended always upon the whims and humours of the native potentates; and if the latter elected to disregard it, as in declarations of war and similar grave questions they constantly did—if even they chose to point their disregard by insult and contumely, as sometimes happened—the missionaries had nothing for it but to submit.

Clearly no definite government could ever be constructed upon principles of this sort, least of all a government intended to deal with savages and supported by a numerically insignificant following. A wholesome respect for us as beings mysteriously apart from them, infinitely wiser, and, above all, infinitely more powerful than they are, is the only key to entire dominion over such people as the aborigines of Central Africa. Need this exclude all idea of friendly relations with

them? Not at all. I venture to say, personally, that I have a sincere regard for the native, but it is, assuredly, not such regard as I might feel for one who was in any respect my equal, nor is it shown in the same way. I love him somewhat as I love my dog, because he is simple, docile, and cheerful, and because he repays kindness by attachment. If we treat the natives on this sort of footing; and if we train their faculties, provide for their needs, and protect them from injury, we do, I take it, all that is required of us at present. Less than this would be unjust, and more would be impolitic.

I cannot see why such an arrangement need leave the missionaries out of account. Let them only render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and no class of workers will be more acceptable than they. The gap that divides civilisation from savagery is in truth much too wide to be bridged by any single force. It calls for the orderly and strenuous co-operation of all; but we have to remember that the first part of the work to be done lies rather within the domain of the administrator than of the preacher. And how should it be otherwise? Consider the social and political conditions under which the Bantu negro has lived from immemorial time. Consider his mind, how brutish it is, how gradually it expands. Naturally the lessons which affect him most directly, and which therefore should be given before others, are those which teach him how to better his material state. The first lesson of all is the lesson of the sword. He must

be conquered before he will submit to be taught. Then, with infinite patience, you may show him, if you will, how to apply European methods to the cultivation of the soil, to the building of houses, and to the making of roads. Later, perhaps, you may eradicate, partially, his natural lawlessness, and imbue him with some sense, not of the moral iniquity of raid and rapine, but of the temporal benefits of order and peace. This is the early work, the work of the soldier and of the civil servant; a great work truly, yet, after all, only a beginning. How many years of good government, and of the security and enlightenment which good government brings, must elapse before the native mind, in general, is at all fitted to receive, with full comprehension, the higher truths of religion and morality, it would be difficult to guess, but we may safely predict that the interval will be a very long one.

I am aware, of course, that the state of things which I have been discussing has greatly changed of late. I know that the ranks of missionaries now at work in Central Africa include many men whose judgment and tolerance are on a level with their piety, and whose influence makes wholly for good. Altogether, too, the feeling between missionaries and the lay public has very noticeably improved within recent years; and, convinced as I am that such friction as has hitherto existed must be ascribed chiefly to misconceptions, to a defective sense of the proportion of things, and to a tendency to look at details rather than at great ultimate purposes, I am

encouraged to hope that a frank exposition, however incomplete, of the origin of so many mistakes and prejudices may help, in some degree, to remove them entirely. At any rate, it is with this hope and none other that I have written.

CHAPTER XXI

NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA

ANYBODY who looks at the map of Africa will see that the area entitled "British Central Africa" embraces, in addition to the Protectorate of that name, a much more considerable tract of land, known as North-Eastern Rhodesia. I have thought it advisable, before bringing my book to a close, to devote a few remarks to this great province, which (although contained within well-defined boundaries of its own, and not under the immediate authority of the Crown) is frequently confused with the Protectorate, being in fact closely adjacent to it, included within the same "sphere of influence," sharing the same territorial designation, and dating its existence, as a British possession, from the same period.

North-Eastern Rhodesia, as its name implies, forms part of the territory of the British South Africa Company, under whose charter it was placed just at the time when the Foreign Office assumed political responsibility for Nyasaland. Its affairs are directly controlled by an official of the Company, styled the Administrator, the scheme of government being in accordance with

the Africa Order in Council (1889) and the North-Eastern Rhodesia Order in Council (1900), which grant very extensive powers to the Administrator, subject however to certain rights of supervision, exercised on behalf of the Imperial Government, by his Majesty's Commissioner for the British Central Africa Protectorate.

Although North-Eastern Rhodesia has thus been included among our African dominions for a number of years, its actual development is of much more recent date ; and I think I am correct in saying that the practical organisation of its civil service was first undertaken by the present Administrator, Mr. R. E. Codrington, who succeeded to office in 1898, and to whose reports I am chiefly indebted for such information as I possess about the territory under his jurisdiction.

We shall certainly be justified in assuming that the pacification of Nyasaland, accomplished under the Imperial Government between 1891 and 1896, was of great advantage to the Chartered Company when, a year or two later, it embarked seriously on the administration of its Central African dominions. By that time the Protectorate, after a long struggle, had been brought under absolute control ; a salutary example had been made of the most notorious raiders and malefactors in the country ; and a small but well-disciplined army of Indian and Native soldiers was in readiness, either to maintain order within the Protectorate itself, or to proceed at any time, if necessary, to the assistance of the Company's officials.

To these circumstances, more than to anything else, we must ascribe the comparative absence of hostilities which has marked the brief history of North-Eastern Rhodesia, and has enabled the Chartered Company to initiate quietly its programme of civil reform.

Yet, when every allowance has been made, the progress achieved within the last five years is highly remarkable. During that short period the whole territory has been explored, mapped and divided into fiscal and administrative districts, under the charge of Civil and Native Commissioners, whose powers and duties closely coincide with those of the Protectorate Collectors and Magistrates. A High Court of Justice has been established. A police force has been raised and equipped. Administrative stations have been founded in every part of the country, the capital being fixed at Fort Jameson, east of the Loangwa River, on a plateau nearly 4000 feet high. Hospitals have been built. A postal and telegraph service is in working order. There are already some 800 miles of roads, not reckoning footpaths and the so-called Stevenson Road across the Tanganyika plateau, which has been completed to its terminus by the Company's engineers.

Of other public works, the most interesting is certainly the Livingstone Memorial at Old Chitambo's. I have said that the heart of the explorer was buried by his native servants, according to his wish, in this remote spot, probably one of the most desolate in all Africa. During the twenty-five years which followed,

scarcely any Europeans seem to have visited the place—I believe not more than five or six at most. The natives tell a strange story to the effect that a white woman and her husband came long ago from the direction of Tanganyika, and, after praying at the grave and putting a fence round the great tree which overshadowed it, went away southward, they knew not whither. However that may be, it was not until 1898, or thereabout, that attention was drawn to the decayed state of this same tree and to the fact that, unless steps were at once taken to replace it by some permanent landmark, all trace of the historic spot which it had marked for a quarter of a century must be lost. Subscriptions were accordingly raised both in South Africa and at home, and shortly afterwards the old tree was destroyed, to make room for the more lasting monument which now occupies its site. All that has been preserved of it (excepting some small pieces distributed as souvenirs) is a section of the trunk, upon which are carved the names of Dr. Livingstone and of his native followers, together with the date of his death.

As regards the physical features of North-Eastern Rhodesia, it is naturally impossible, within the limits of a single short chapter, to give more than a very general idea of a country which extends over a hundred and twenty thousand square miles, and touches, on its sides, frontiers so widely separated as those of German East Africa and Barotseland, Portuguese East Africa, and the Congo Free State.

Most of this land lies at a height of 3000 feet or more above sea-level, rising to 5090 feet on the Nyasa-Tanganyika plateau, and to little less on the Muchinga Highlands and on the undulating hills which form the Nyasa-Zambesi watershed.

The vegetation is for the most part of exactly the same type as in Nyasaland; that is to say, it consists of very close and extensive but rather scrubby forest, with an undergrowth of rank grass, which reaches, at maturity, a height of ten or twelve feet. I don't know whether the beautiful Mlanje cedar (*Widdringtonia Whytei*) is found in North-Eastern Rhodesia; but all the other characteristic trees and plants of the Protectorate are quite common there—the stiff, pre-Raphaelite-looking masuku, the flat-topped mimosa, the mbawa (a mahogany), the baobab, the Borassus and other palms being among the most ubiquitous.

The water-system of the country is very remarkable, containing in the rivers Chambezi and Luapula the remotest fountains of the Congo, and in the Loangwa one of the main branches of the Zambesi, besides a veritable network of minor streams; while the lakes include Bangweolo and Mweru (two of the most interesting of minor African lakes), and the southern extremity of mighty Tanganyika, on which is situated the Company's port of Kituta. Close to Lake Mweru lies the wilderness of reeds and mud popularly called Mweru Marsh, and well known throughout Central Africa as a great haunt of

elephants and other beasts. This marsh, which was discovered by Mr. Alfred Sharpe, has since been thoroughly explored by various travellers, and is now a regularly-constituted game reserve, for which purpose it is by nature admirably suited.

With regard to the wild animals of North-Eastern Rhodesia generally, they appear to be practically identical with those of Nyasaland ; but in Mr. Codrington's official Report for 1898-1900 there is an essay on this subject, written by Mr. C. P. Chesnaye (Secretary to the Administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia), in which he enumerates among the fauna of that territory two creatures which I certainly did not believe to inhabit any part of Central Africa ; to wit, the Striped Hyæna and the Gavial or Long-Nosed Crocodile. As to the Striped Hyæna, I have certainly heard vague rumours once or twice of its presence in Central Africa, though I have never found it in that country myself, nor met anybody who could bear direct witness to its existence there. Concerning the Gavial, Mr. Chesnaye's statement is so positive that I presume it must have been verified by his own observation. He describes it (together with the common Nilotic crocodile) as infesting "all the lakes and rivers, even the smallest," but does not tell us by what particular variety it is represented. The true Gavial (*G. Gangeticus*) I had always thought to be confined to the East Indies. Certainly I have never seen or heard of any of the family *Gavialidae* in the waters of Nyasaland,

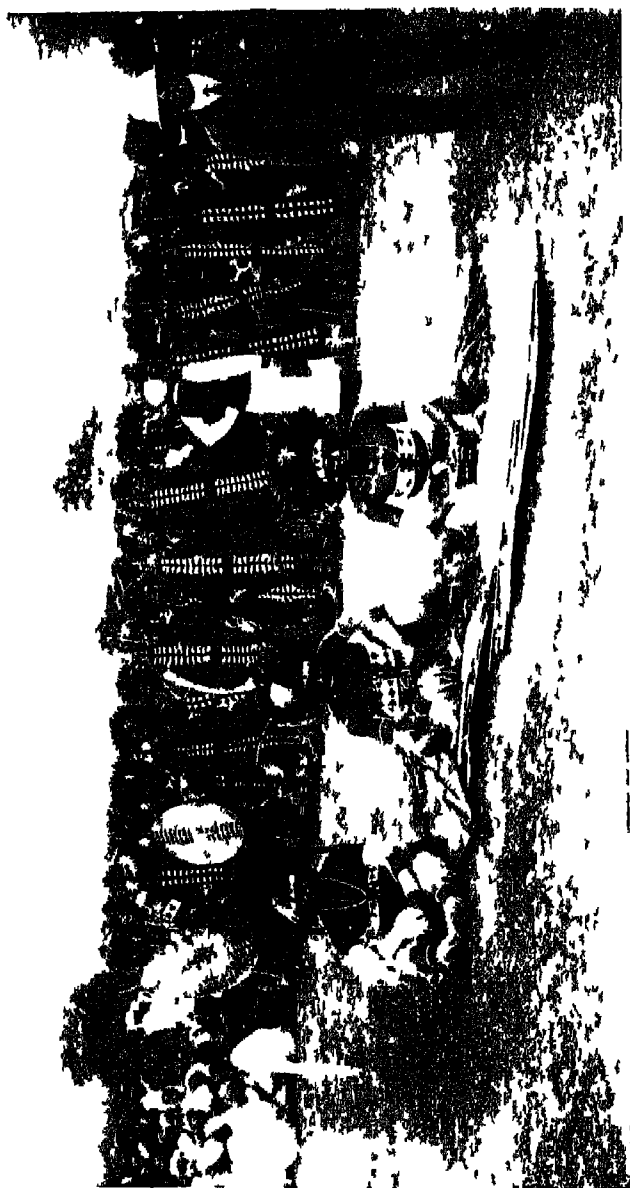
nor does Sir Harry Johnston in his book on British Central Africa make any reference to these reptiles.

Of the antelopes recorded by Mr. Chesnaye, the Tsessabe (Sassaby) is not a denizen of the Protectorate; and Lechwe and Sitaturga, if they inhabit that country at all, are very uncommon; while Puku are localised in the districts of Marimba and Central Angoniland, particularly on the Bua River, near the Chartered Company's frontier.

With regard to the native population of North-Eastern Rhodesia, the census of 1900-1902 puts it at 338,878, which Mr. Codrington thinks is approximately correct. If this is so, then this territory must be but thinly peopled, with barely three inhabitants to the square mile; but, while I am not entitled to pronounce an opinion in this matter with regard to North-Eastern Rhodesia particularly, my general impression, based upon a good deal of practical experience, is that a census of natives in a new and wild country nearly always gives a total much below the true one, however carefully the figures may have been compiled.

There are in North-Eastern Rhodesia two great dominant tribes; to wit, the Angoni in the south and east, and the Awemba farther north near the Tanganyika plateau—to one or other of which were subject the Achewa, Wakunda, Wabisa, Awiwa, Watawa, Amambwe, and various other clans.

The Angoni of North-Eastern Rhodesia are



Photo

ANGONI AT THE CORONATION REVIEW

Mr R H Statten

commonly known as Mpeseni's Angoni, from the name of their most celebrated chief, whose defeat at our hands I have already chronicled in Chapter III. of this book, and who has since died at an advanced age. Mr. Codrington estimates the present number of Angoni showing traces of Zulu origin at 10,000 only, the remainder having hopelessly degenerated, through the admixture of inferior blood, especially that of the Achewa. Much the same may be said of the Nyasaland Angoni, who, with the possible exception of Mombera's people, show little evidence of Zulu descent, save in their dress and in certain ceremonial rites and customs. One might say of them in truth—

“Ye have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?”

Mpeseni's Angoni were until lately distinguished as a great cattle-owning tribe, and some of the trek oxen which they had among them in 1898 were the finest animals of the kind that I have ever seen in my life. It is, however, regrettable to hear that “in spite of advice, protestation, and, finally, of direct orders to the contrary,” they have recently sold or slaughtered nearly all their magnificent herds, which have, it is reported, decreased within less than three years from 14,000 head to 1224!

The Awemba, the other fighting tribe of North-Eastern Rhodesia, are located, as I have said, close to the Tanganyika plateau under its southern edge. They long possessed a local

reputation for military skill and bravery, scarcely second to that of the Angoni themselves; and, indeed, when the latter, in the course of their marauding expeditions, came at last into collision with the Awemba, they experienced one of the few serious repulses that have fallen to their lot in inter-tribal warfare, and withdrew finally to their own country on the Lower Loangwa, leaving their rivals to exercise undisputed sovereignty over all the peoples of the South End of Tanganyika.

Whatever admiration, however, we may feel for the courage of the Awemba must be somewhat discounted by the frightful stories which are related (with perfect truth, I am afraid) of the bestial ferocity for which, even among their fellow-savages, they were notorious, and of the abominable mutilations which it was their practice to inflict both upon the living and the dead. But, with the advent of British rule, and the removal of their last great paramount chief, Mwamba, who died in 1898, these Awemba, like their old enemies the Angoni, seem to have wholly abandoned their predatory habits, and now live at complete peace both with the neighbouring tribes and with white men.

The Hut Tax was first imposed upon the people of North-Eastern Rhodesia in 1901, and has since been collected without difficulty from the superior native races, and wherever civilised authority has been able to make itself strongly felt, although, as must always happen for some years after the first introduction of such an impost, there have been numerous evasions on

the part of timid, broken and mongrel tribes, inhabiting distant or inaccessible parts of the country. The total Hut Tax revenue for the twelve months ending March 31st, 1902, nevertheless amounted to £8505, representing 56,700 contributory hut-owners.

With respect to the distribution of the native population, it is interesting to me, in view of the excessive tribal decentralisation which has followed the establishment of our ascendancy in Nyasaland, to observe that Mr. Codrington, in his official Report for 1900-1902, has remarked, independently, a precisely similar phenomenon in North-Eastern Rhodesia, and finds it productive of the same administrative difficulties which I have myself ascribed to it in a previous chapter. He says: "Owing undoubtedly to the universal sense of security for life and property, large villages have almost ceased to exist, the population being now distributed in small communities over a much larger area than formerly. This dispersal of tribes, although favourable in some respects to the prosperity of the people, in that the risk of famine is minimised, and the spread of disease is checked, and the population increases rapidly, presents, in other respects, less favourable features, in the weakening of tribal ties and obligations, which renders it extremely difficult to control the people through the authority of their chiefs and headmen."

The ideal state of things, clearly, would be one in which a certain comfortable measure of political coherence and tribal sentiment should survive

this disintegration of masses, and enable us to deal with scattered villages collectively, through the influence of a few recognised leaders. But I am afraid no such golden mean is attainable. The organisation of a savage tribe, although simple, is highly sensitive. We cannot pick it to pieces. We cannot prune and modify it to suit our requirements, retaining this and abolishing that. It must either be left to itself, or shattered totally and replaced by a government which is prepared to take upon itself, thenceforward, every responsibility incident to the situation, and to shirk nothing of the drudgery that underlies all exercise of paternal power.

Mr. Codrington gives a somewhat unfavourable report as to the state of trade and industry during the period 1901-1902, ascribing the lack of progress partly, and, I think, rightly, to the fact that the Shiré Highlands Railway, on which great hopes were centred, had not, at the time when the report was written, been carried through. It is to be hoped, now that the railway has been definitely taken in hand, that the prospects of commerce will sensibly improve. An important development of the mineral deposits is expected, and several companies are even now actively engaged in prospecting, chiefly for gold and copper. Cattle-ranching has also been started with a promise of success; but, in my opinion, it is chiefly to their agricultural resources that both North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland must look for such prosperity as may be in store for them. Hitherto no part of British Central Africa

has had a fair chance in this direction,* the heavy cost of freight, the slowness and irregularity of transport, and the lack of markets within a reasonable distance, having made it impossible to export most forms of local produce at anything like a satisfactory profit. Just now, (if we exclude native crops,) the coffee plantations of Nyasaland may be said to represent the only established agricultural industry in all British Central Africa, because coffee is the only article which has been found to repay the pains and money spent in its cultivation. Even here, if we are to believe what the planters themselves tell us, the paucity of field labour and transport has lately been such as to involve many coffee estates in grave embarrassment; and when we have made every allowance for exaggeration, there undoubtedly remains a substantial amount of truth in these statements.

As for products other than coffee, several have been tried from time to time on an experimental scale, but nobody gives them a serious thought, simply because it is known that scarcely any could be placed upon the market at a paying figure under existing conditions. Yet most of them would flourish beyond all doubt, both in North-Eastern Rhodesia and in the Protectorate. Wheat has been grown successfully on the plateaux of Angoniland and Tanganyika, and its cultivation could easily be extended to other similar neighbourhoods, if inducement offered. Cotton and rice would assuredly thrive in the numerous alluvial plains. Tobacco has done well in various parts of the Shiré Highlands. The sugar-cane

prosper in the Shiré-Zambesi valley. Of other products, we may mention the *Landolphia* rubber vine, to which some attention has lately been paid; *Sansiviera* fibre, indigo, chillies, spices, and native crops such as maize, millet, and cassava. English vegetables of every description flourish exceedingly, wherever the water-supply is sufficient for their needs. Of fruits, other than purely indigenous ones, strawberries and raspberries would probably succeed; figs, limes, bananas, pomegranates, mangoes, loquats, pineapples, etc. abound; oranges have been grown with encouraging results, and, recently, a heavy crop of good peaches has been gathered from a dozen or so of trees at Zomba—thus disposing of the idea, long current, that stone fruits are not adapted to the Central African soil and climate.

Under these circumstances, I think we may fairly regard British Central Africa generally as a land of large agricultural possibilities. I look for no sensational departure, no royal road to fortune; but, given sufficient capital and a means of transporting produce quickly and at a less than prohibitive cost, there really seems no reason why local resources should not be so far developed as to provide at least the means of comfortable livelihood for a numerous farming and planting community, and suitable employment for the whole of the native population.

This brings us once more to the question of labour. My general views on the subject have been explained already, and there remains only this to add—that if we consider British Central

Africa as a country with a definite future before it, and above all a future dependent mainly on its agricultural and pastoral capabilities, then the arguments against any unrestricted diversion of its labour supply to South Africa become strongly reinforced.

I do not look at this matter from the exclusive point of view of pounds, shillings and pence, or balance merely the interests of coffee-planters against those of mine-owners. Whether my views be right or wrong, I claim at least that they are based on wide considerations. Briefly, I see in British Central Africa a region holding out considerable promise in the direction of agriculture, and little promise, so far, in any other direction. I see in the native tribes of that country a people who, if they can properly be referred to any particular industrial class at all, must be termed an agricultural people. I believe that in agricultural operations of an extended nature, carried out under European supervision in the neighbourhood of their own homes, these people would find the employment best suited to their abilities, and most likely to ensure their gradual advancement, while preserving to them their simplicity, their contentment, and their robust physical health.

On the other hand, I consider it highly improbable that they could long engage in such occupation as the gold-mining industry of the Rand without losing all inclination and capacity for work of the very different kind likely to be offered to them on their repatriation. If a few thousand men can be spared to the southern

- colonies, well and good ; but, the more I reflect on this matter, the more do I hope that the exigencies of the case may be met without necessitating any extensive deportation of labour from the interior, and that British Central Africa may be enabled to retain the bulk of her native population for employment within her own frontiers.
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CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION

THOSE of my readers who have had the patience to follow this account of Central Africa, and of the progress of affairs in our little Protectorate of Nyasaland, may perhaps conclude from my advocacy of certain measures touching the development of the country and its inhabitants, that I am a would-be reformer of primitive life—a man who looks on the wilderness rather with an eye to its eventual reclamation than to its actual charms. This would be an over-statement of the case. It is impossible for any one who has taken a part, however small, in the administration of our remoter dependencies, not to feel a lively interest in them as such; not to dwell with satisfaction on the thought of difficulties overborne; not to remark the shadow of imminent events, and consider, in his own mind, the policy best suited to meet them. There is nothing in this attitude incompatible with a strong love of wild nature, even with a strong preference for it over more ordered conditions. But, truth to tell, wild nature cannot long endure in any guise. Once a European settlement is formed among savages,

we know that certain changes are bound to follow. Not laws, but individuals, create these changes. Governments may direct the growth of civilisations, but it is by men, whether they will or no, that the atmosphere of civilisation is induced. Our every trading-post, every plantation, nay every hunting-camp, focusses an aspect of things alien to its environment. Time passes, the new aspect is no longer new, the vagaries of the stranger cease to astonish, begin even to attract imitators. We cannot check this trend; and whether we welcome or deplore it, it matters nothing; we have to face it.

With this tribute to practical forces I may be allowed nevertheless to mingle a little perverse regret. No man who has known and loved a country in its primitive state can watch it emerge therefrom with feelings quite at ease. He has helped, perhaps, to bring about this emancipation; he is proud to have done so, yet still a vague disquietude spoils the fulness of his complacency. Longer than any of our foreign dominions, Central Africa has played the part of the Sleeping Beauty. The nineteenth century, within two decades of its close, found her in a condition not very different probably from that which existed before the centuries began. Her progress during the years that have elapsed since we assumed direct political responsibility towards her has been steady, doubtless, but it has been in no way sensational—her essential simplicity has remained untouched. On particular lines her advance must still be subject to absolute limitations, but these

do not exclude the possibility of great changes in other respects. The turning-point that comes in the history of all colonies is now for the first time well within the horizon of her future. Every year diminishes the extent of her severance from the outer world. Already the electric telegraph is working between and beyond her extreme frontiers. The locomotive-engine is soon to follow. Her people have gone to fight our own battles east and west. There is a talk of bringing them to labour for us in the south.

All this is right and obvious enough, I know. The crisis is a natural crisis. The humble task of the pioneer is almost accomplished, and larger forces are taking from his hands the destiny he has rough-hewn. Looking at the map of the world, he sees the bright, positive colours of civilisation encroaching deeper upon the lonely spaces once his undisputed field; looking around him, he sees the world itself growing always tamer, always more under the control of specialised energies, more intolerant of the untrained. Need we wonder if a few regrets mingle with his loyal welcome; if, turned from the path his hands have cleared, he regards a little sadly his narrowing province, and grudges, for the moment, another stronghold lost to him where there are now so few?

APPENDIX

GAME REGULATIONS

NOTICE

THE following Regulations, made by His Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General, and allowed by the Secretary of State, are published for general information.

ALFRED SHARPE,

His Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General.

Zomba, January 31, 1902.

KING'S REGULATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 99 OF "THE AFRICA
ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1889."

No. 1 of 1902.

Preservation of Game.

1. In these Regulations—

"Hunt, kill, or capture" means hunting, killing, or capturing by any method, and includes every attempt to kill or capture; "hunting" includes molesting.

"Game" means any animal mentioned in any of the Schedules.

"Person" means an individual of any nationality whatsoever.

"Native" means any native of Africa, not being of European or American race or parentage.

"Schedule" and "Schedules" refer to the Schedules annexed to these Regulations.

General Provisions.

2. No person, unless he is authorized by a special licence in that behalf, shall hunt, kill, or capture any of the animals mentioned in the First Schedule.

3. No person, unless he is authorized by a special licence under these Regulations, shall hunt, kill, or capture any animal of the kind mentioned in the Second Schedule if the animal be (a) immature, or (b) a female accompanied by its young.

4. No person, unless he is authorized under these Regulations, shall hunt, kill, or capture any animal mentioned in the Third, Fourth, or Fifth Schedules.

5. The Commissioner may, if he thinks fit, by Proclamation, declare that the name of any species, variety, or sex of animal, whether beast or bird, not mentioned in any Schedule hereto, shall be added to a particular Schedule, or that the name of any species or variety of animal mentioned or included in one Schedule shall be transferred to another Schedule, and, if he thinks fit, apply such declaration to the whole of the Protectorate, or restrict it to any district or districts in which he thinks it expedient that the animal should be protected.

6. No person shall within the Protectorate sell, or purchase, or offer or expose for sale, any head, horns, skin, feathers, or flesh of any animal mentioned in any of the Schedules, unless the animal has been kept in a domesticated state, and no person shall knowingly store, pack, convey, or export any part of any animal which he has reason to believe has been killed or captured in contravention of these Regulations.

7. If any person is found to be in possession of any elephant's tusk weighing less than 11 lb., or any ivory being, in the opinion of the Court, part of an elephant's tusk which would have weighed less than 11 lb., he shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations, and the tusk or ivory shall be forfeited unless he proves that the tusk or ivory was not obtained in breach of these Regulations.

8. No person shall use any poison, or, without a special licence, any dynamite or other explosive for the killing or taking of any fish.

9. Where it appears to the Commissioner that any method used for killing or capturing animals or fish is unduly destructive, he may, by Proclamation, prohibit such method or prescribe the conditions under which any method may be used; and if any person uses any method so prohibited, or uses any method otherwise than according to the conditions so prescribed, he shall be liable to the same penalties as for a breach of these Regulations.

10. Save as provided by these Regulations, or by any Proclamation under these Regulations, any person may hunt, kill, or capture any animal not mentioned in any of the Schedules, or any fish.

Game Reserves.

11. The areas described in the Eighth Schedule hereto are hereby declared to be game reserves.

The Commissioner, with the approval of the Secretary of State, may by Proclamation declare any other portion of the

Protectorate to be a game reserve, and may define or alter the limits of any game reserve, and these Regulations shall apply to every such game reserve.

Save as provided in these Regulations or by any such Proclamation, any person who, unless he is authorized by a special licence, hunts, kills, or captures any animal whatever in a game reserve, or is found within a game reserve under circumstances showing that he was unlawfully in pursuit of any animal, shall be guilty of a breach of these Regulations.

Licences to Europeans, &c.

12. The following licences may be granted by the Commissioner or such person or persons as may be authorized by the Commissioner, that is to say :—

- (1) A "Licence 'A.'"
- (2) A "Licence 'B.'"
- (3) A "Licence 'C.'"

The following fees shall be payable for licences, that is to say, for "Licence 'A,'" 25*l.*, for "Licence 'B,'" 4*l.*, for "Licence 'C,'" 2*l.*

Every licence shall expire on the 31st March, and no licence shall remain in force for more than twelve calendar months.

Every licence shall bear in full the name of the person to whom it is granted, the date of issue, the period of its duration, and the signature of the Commissioner, or other person authorized to grant licences.

The applicant for a licence may be required to give security by bond or deposit, not exceeding 100*l.*, for his compliance with these Regulations, and with the additional conditions (if any) contained in his licence.

A licence is not transferable.

Every licence must be produced when called for by any officer of the Protectorate Government.

In granting licences under these Regulations, a person authorized to grant licences shall observe any general or particular instructions of the Commissioner.

13. Licence "A" authorizes the holder to hunt, kill, or capture animals of any of the species mentioned in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Schedules, but unless the licence otherwise provides, not more than the number of each species fixed by the second column of those Schedules.

14. Licence "B" authorizes the holder to hunt, kill, or capture animals of the species and to the number mentioned in the Fourth and Fifth Schedules only.

15. Licence "C" authorizes the holder to hunt, kill, or capture animals of the species and to the number mentioned in the Fifth Schedule only.

16. The holder of a licence "A," "B," or "C," granted under these Regulations, may by the licence be authorized to kill or capture additional animals of any such species on payment of such additional fees as may be prescribed by the Commissioner.

17. Where it appears proper to the Commissioner for scientific, administrative, or other reasons, he may grant a special licence to any person to kill or capture animals of any one or more species mentioned in any of the Schedules, or to kill, hunt, or capture, in a game reserve, specified beasts or birds of prey, or other animals whose presence is detrimental to the purposes of the game reserve, or, in particular cases, to kill or capture, as the case may be, in a game reserve, an animal or animals of any one or more species mentioned in the Schedules.

A special licence shall be subject to such conditions as to fees and security (if any), number, sex, and age of specimens, district and season for hunting, and other matters as the Commissioner may prescribe.

Save as aforesaid, the holder of a special licence shall be subject to the general provisions of these Regulations, and to the provisions relating to holders of licences.

18. Every licence-holder shall keep a register of the animals killed or captured by him in the form specified in the Seventh Schedule.

The register shall be submitted as often as convenient, but not less frequently than once in six months, to the nearest Collector, who shall countersign the entries up to date.

Any person authorized to grant licences may at any time call upon any licence-holder to produce his register for inspection.

If any holder of a licence fails to keep his register truly, he shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations.

19. The Commissioner may revoke any licence when he is satisfied that the holder has been guilty of a breach of these Regulations, or of his licence, or has connived with any other person in any such breach, or that in any matters in relation hereto, he has acted otherwise than in good faith.

20. The Commissioner may, at his discretion, direct that a licence under these Regulations shall be refused to any applicant.

21. Any person whose licence has been lost or destroyed may obtain a fresh licence for the remainder of his term on payment of a fee not exceeding one-fifth of the fee paid for the licence so lost or destroyed.

22. No licence granted under these Regulations shall entitle the holder to hunt, kill, or capture any animal, or to trespass

upon private property without the consent of the owner or occupier.

23. Any person who, after having killed or captured animals to the number and of the species authorized by his licence, proceeds to hunt, kill, or capture any animals which he is not authorized to kill or capture, shall be guilty of a breach of these Regulations, and punishable accordingly.

24. No person shall employ a native to hunt, kill, or capture any game. A licence-holder, however, when hunting animals may employ natives to assist him, but such natives shall not use fire-arms.

25. The Commissioner or any person authorized by him in that behalf may, at his discretion, require any person importing fire-arms or ammunition that may be used by such person for the purpose of killing game or other animals, to take out a licence under these Regulations, and may refuse to allow the fire-arms or ammunition to be taken from the public warehouse until such licence is taken out.

Restrictions on Killing of Game by Natives.

26. When the members of any native tribe or the native inhabitants of any village appear to be dependent on the flesh of wild animals for their subsistence, the Collector of the district may, with the approval of the Commissioner, by order addressed to the Chief of the tribe or Headman of the village, authorize the tribesmen or inhabitants, as the case may be, to kill animals within such area, and subject to such conditions as to mode of hunting, number, species, and sex of animals and otherwise, as may be prescribed by the order.

An order under this Regulation shall not authorize the killing of any animal mentioned in the First Schedule.

The provisions of these Regulations with respect to holders of licences shall not apply to a member of a tribe or native inhabitant of a village to which an order under this Regulation applies.

Save as aforesaid, the general provisions of these Regulations shall apply to every native who is authorized under this Regulation, and a breach of any order shall be a breach of these Regulations.

27. The Collector of a district may, with the approval of the Commissioner, grant a licence, similar to licence "A" or licence "B," to any native, upon such terms as to fees and other conditions as the Commissioner may direct.

Legal Procedure.

28. Where any public officer of the British Central Africa Protectorate thinks it expedient, for the purposes of verifying

- the register of a licence-holder, or suspects that any person has been guilty of a breach of these Regulations, he may inspect and search, or authorize any subordinate officer to inspect and search, any baggage, packages, waggons, tents, building, or caravan belonging to or under the control of such person or his agent, and if the officer finds any heads, tusks, skins, or other remains of animals appearing to have been killed, or any live animals appearing to have been captured, in contravention of these Regulations, he shall seize and take the same before a Magistrate, to be dealt with according to law.

29. Any person who hunts, kills, or captures any animals in contravention of these Regulations, or otherwise commits any breach of these Regulations, shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine which may extend to 50%, and where the offence relates to more animals than two, to a fine in respect of each animal which may extend to 25%, and in either case to imprisonment which may extend to two months, with or without a fine.

In all cases of conviction, any heads, horns, tusks, skins, or other remains of animals found in the possession of the offender or his agent, and all live animals captured in contravention of these Regulations, shall be liable to forfeiture.

If the person convicted is the holder of a licence, his licence may be revoked by the Court.

30. Where in any proceeding under these Regulations any fine is imposed, the Court may award any sum or sums not exceeding half the total fine to any informer or informers.

Repeal, &c.

31. All previous Regulations as to the hunting, killing, or capturing of game in the Protectorate are hereby repealed.

32. The forms of licences appearing in the Schedule hereto, with such modification as circumstances require, may be used.

33. These Regulations may be cited as "The British Central Africa Game Regulations, 1902." They shall come into operation on the 1st April, 1902, but any licences may be previously granted, appointed to come into force on that day.

ALFRED SHARPE,

His Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General.

Zomba, January 31, 1902.

Allowed :

LANSDOWNE,

*His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs.*

SCHEDULES.¹

FIRST SCHEDULE.

Animals not to be hunted, killed, or captured by any person, except under special licence.

1. Giraffe. 2. Mountain Zebra. 3. Wild Ass. 4. White-tailed Gnu (*Connochoetes gnu*). 5. Eland (*Taurotragus*). 6. Buffalo. 7. Elephant (female or young). 8. Vulture (any species). 9. Secretary-bird. 10. Owl (any species). 11. Rhinoceros-bird or beef-eater (*Buphaga*), any species.

SECOND SCHEDULE.

Animals, the females of which are not to be hunted, killed, or captured when accompanied by their young, and the young of which are not to be captured, except under special licence.

1. Rhinoceros. 2. Hippopotamus. 3. Zebra (other than the Mountain Zebra). 4. Chevrotain (*Dorcattherium*). 5. All antelopes or gazelles not mentioned in the First Schedule.

THIRD SCHEDULE.

Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licence "A" only.

KIND.	NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Elephant (male)	2
2. Rhinoceros	2
3. Wildebeest Gnu (except white-tailed species)...	6

¹ These Schedules may contain the names of some species or varieties not found, or only occasionally found, in British Central Africa.

FOURTH SCHEDULE.

Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licences "A" and "B."

KIND.	NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Hippopotamus	6
2. Zebras (other than the Mountain Zebra) ...	2
3. Antelopes and gazelles—	
Class A—	
<i>Hippotragus</i> (sable or roan)	6
<i>Strepsiceros</i> (Kudu)	6
4. Colobi and other fur-monkeys	6
5. Aard-Varks (<i>Orycteropus</i>)	2
6. Serval	2
7. Cheetah (<i>Cynelurus</i>)	2
8. Aard-wolf (<i>Proteles</i>)	2
9. Smaller monkeys of each species	2
10. Marabous	6
11. Egret	2
12. Antelopes and gazelles—	
Class B—	
Any species other than those in Class A ...	15
13. Chevrotains (<i>Dorcatherium</i>)	10
14. Wild pig of each species	10
15. Smaller cats	10
16. Jackal of each species	10

FIFTH SCHEDULE.

Animals, limited numbers of which may be hunted, killed, or captured under Licences "A," "B," and "C."

KIND.	NUMBER ALLOWED.
1. Hippopotamus	6
2. Wart-hog	6
3. Bush-pig	6
4. The following antelopes and gazelles only—	
Hartebeest	30 animals in all, under 1 licence, made up of animals of a single species or of several.
Impala	
Reedbuck	
Duyker	
Klipspringer	
Steinbuck	
Waterbuck	
Bushbuck	

SIXTH SCHEDULE.

No. 1.—Licence "A" (fee, 25*l.*), or Licence "B" (fee, 4*l.*), or Licence "C" (fee 2*l.*).

A.B., of _____, is hereby licensed to hunt, kill, or capture wild animals within the British Central Africa Protectorate for the period from the date hereof until the 31st March, 19____, but subject to the provisions and restrictions of "The Game Regulations, 1902."

(The said A.B. is authorized, subject to the said Regulations, to kill or capture the following animals in addition to the number of the same species allowed by the Regulations, that is to say:—

Dated this _____ day of _____, 19____. Fee paid (_____ *l.*).

(Signed)

Commissioner.

SEVENTH SCHEDULE.

Game Register.

SPECIES.	NUMBER.	SEX.	LOCALITY.	DATE.	REMARKS.

I declare that the above is a true record of all animals killed by me in the British Central Africa Protectorate under the Licence No. "A," "B," or "C" granted me on the

, 19____.

(Signed)

Passed

19____.

(Signature of examining officer.)

EIGHTH SCHEDULE.

Game Reserves.

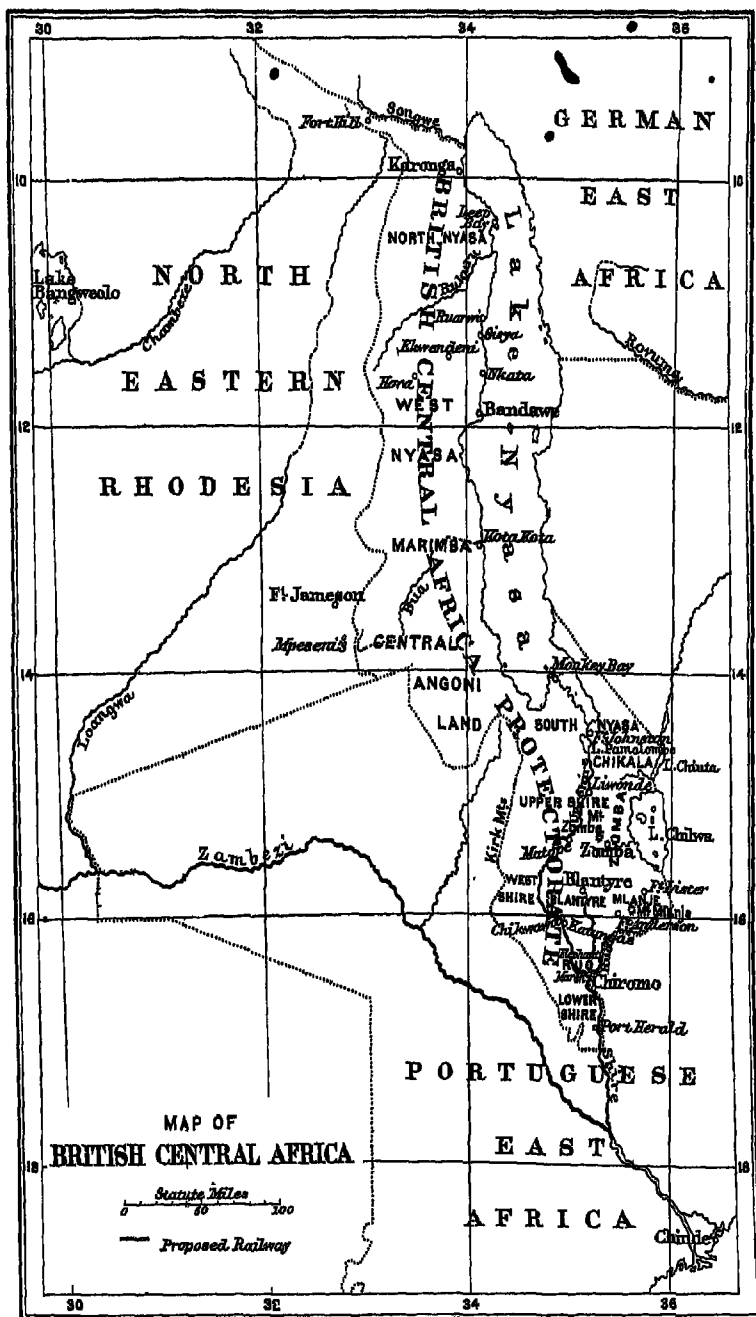
1. The Elephant Marsh Reserve.

Commencing at the junction of the Ruo and Shiré rivers, the boundary of the Elephant Marsh Reserve shall follow the right

bank of the River Ruu as far as the Zoa Falls, and shall thence be carried along a straight line in a north-westerly direction until it strikes the left bank of the River Shiré opposite the junction of the Mwanza with the Shiré; the boundary shall then cross the River Shiré and follow the right bank of the Mwanza River up-stream to a point distant from the Shiré twelve miles in a straight line; thence the boundary shall run in a southerly direction, keeping always at a distance of twelve miles from the right bank of the Shiré River until it reaches the boundary line dividing the Lower Shiré district from the Ruu. It shall then follow that boundary line in an easterly direction until it strikes the right bank of the Shiré River; the boundary shall then follow the right bank of the Shiré River up-stream to a point opposite the point of commencement, namely, the junction of the Shiré and the Ruu rivers.

2. The Lake Chilwa Reserve.

Commencing at the source of the River Palombe in the Mlanje district, the boundary of the Lake Chilwa Reserve shall be carried in an easterly direction to the source of the most southern affluent of the River Sombani, and from this point shall be carried along a straight line in an easterly direction to the Anglo-Portuguese frontier, which it shall follow to the shores of Lake Chilwa. The boundary shall continue along the shore of the lake southward, westward, and northward, as far as the confluence of the Likangala River. It shall then follow the course of the Likangala River up-stream as far as the eastern boundary of Messrs. Buchanan Brothers' Mlungusi estate, thence along the said eastern boundary of the said estate southwards to a point on the left bank of the Ntondwe River. It shall then follow the northern boundary of Mr. Bruce's Namasi estate eastwards until the said boundary reaches the Palombe River, thence along the right bank of the Palombe River up-stream to its source.



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